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Dedicated

to the memory of known and unknown sons and daughters of Kashmir who have bravely fought against religious fanaticism, spiritual thraldom, ideological intolerance, racial prejudice and political persecution and who have laid down their lives for the cause of freedom from the earliest times to the present day.

★

Freedom

To become free, to end tyranny and to abolish superstition
This is my cherished dream, this my desire and this my slogan.

* * *

I have accepted the burden of ages on my head;
The angels of the heavens have shuddered at my doggedness
I have chewed steel, I have braved fire;
I have sipped the blood of my heart;
But this my head has not, till this day,
Bent low before any one else but thee.

—**Poet Azad Kashmiri.**

* * *

The *Bulbul* dotes on roses
On narcissus the bee,
Drunk with the joy of his native land
Is the Kashmiri.
Our native land, O Mahjur,
Is verily a lovely garden
We must love it dearly
We all must love it dearly.

* * *

The wailings avail thee not, O *Bulbul*,
Who will set thee free ?
Thy salvation thou hast to work
With thine own hands alone.

* * *

Birds of the garden are full of song
But each one strikes his own note.....

* * *

If thou wouldst rouse this habitat of roses
Leave toying with kettle-drums
Let there be thunder-storm and tempest, yes, an earthquake.

—**Poet Mahjur Kashmiri.**

THE HISTORY OF
STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM IN KASHMIR

CULTURAL AND POLITICAL

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE PRESENT DAY

BY
PREM NATH BAZAZ

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

INSIDE KASHMIR
AZAD KASHMIR
TRUTH ABOUT KASHMIR
WHITHER INDIA,
—Towards Revivalism or Renaissance?
ABDUL AHAD AZAD KASHMIRI,
—Poet of Humanism— (in Urdu)
GANDHISM, JINNAHISM, SOCIALISM „

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PREFACE

The State of Jammu and Kashmir is passing through a very difficult period of its history. Owing to the dispute between India and Pakistan over the accession issue conditions of insecurity in the present and uncertainty about the future exist in the country such as have never been witnessed by the State people for more than a century. Consequently all classes of Kashmiris, barring the few members of the ruling clique, suffer hardships and misery.

The accession issue has escaped solution so far. Ignorance is the mother of all problems and therefore among the ways of settling them the best is to let the people concerned know as much about them as possible. The Kashmir dispute has become complicated because neither the Indians nor the Pakistanis are shown all sides of the picture. Interested politicians in either country incite only the baser passions and deep-rooted prejudices of their backward and semi-educated countrymen, telling them falsehoods and half-truths about the affairs of the State. If the dispute is to be settled light must be thrown on all aspects of the issue and every point of view fully discussed to enable the people to distinguish between right and wrong.

This book is different from many that have been written on Kashmir during the past six years since the dispute started. It is not a propagandist's book; it does not present the problem of Kashmir or suggest a solution as would cater to the predisposition and wishful thinking of any party or community. Unlike other books it neither strives to prove that the State's accession to India is legally, constitutionally or morally justified because the Maharaja applied for it, as has been held by the rulers of India; nor does it support the view that the State must become part of Pakistan because without Kashmir Pakistan would be incomplete, as is frequently asserted by the prominent leaders of the Muslim League. It is the voice of one who believes that the future of Kashmir, owing to its past traditions and culture, is inextricably linked with both her neighbours.

But Kashmir belongs to Kashmiris and neither the Maharaja had, nor any outsider has, however powerful he may be, any right to dictate anything about its future.

The present dispute over the accession of the State has its roots in the past history of Kashmir. Unless therefore one is fairly acquainted with the cultural and political developments of the country during the early and medieval periods it is not easy to comprehend the currents and cross-currents underlying the accession dispute. I have therefore tried to present a connected history of the Freedom Movement of the people of Kashmir from the dawn of civilisation to our own times.

One of the aims in writing this book has been to explain the present political, economic and cultural position of Kashmir against its historical background. I have attempted to make an objective and dispassionate analysis of the accession dispute, not only in the context of the past history of the Valley, but also with a special reference to the developments during the two decades preceding the partition of India.

That the uncommom views expressed in this book are bound to raise controversies in the extremist circles in India as well as in Pakistan, I have little doubt. But I am equally sure that liberal and unbiased people in search of factual information and in quest of truth will find material in these pages that may help them to comprehend a problem which, if left unsolved for some more time, might endanger the peace of the 450 million people of the subcontinent, perhaps of the world.

Having myself been an actor in the drama of contemporary politics in the State, it has not been easy for me to shake off my likes and dislikes regarding parties and personalities which have appeared and disappeared since 1931. It has however been my endeavour to narrate everything, as far as is humanly possible, in an unattached manner without allowing any personal prejudice to befog the issues, and without twisting facts. I have tried to be extremely careful that my historical sense and devotion to truth do not get vitiated by my regard for party politics. I have expressed appreciation where I deemed it was deserved, and condemned where I thought condemnation was needed. How far I have succeeded it is for the reader to judge.

While expressing my own views clearly and unreservedly I have taken pains to verify every statement of fact made in the book. I have put the viewpoints of all political parties, leaders and workers in their own words whenever and wherever I have critically examined them. Nevertheless even after having taken these precautions if, unwittingly, I should have committed a mistake which causes pain to any one, none would be more unhappy than myself.

To the reader who is interested to learn more about Kashmir politics during the early part of the Dogra Rule or in the thirties of the present century when the powerful nationalist movement took roots, I would suggest my book *Inside Kashmir* which narrates the fascinating events of the period in all their details. The material used in chapters six, seven, eight and nine of the present volume has been taken and abridged from that book.

Delhi,
February 1954.

Prem Nath Bazaz.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In writing the present volume I have consulted and taken help from many distinguished authors who preceded me and I have at places extensively quoted from their writings. I gratefully acknowledge my debt to all of them.

The reports of statements and speeches of the Indian leaders and the Kashmir Nationalists quoted in the volume have been taken from (1) the *Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), (2) the *Statesman* (New Delhi), the *Times of India* (Delhi), and (3) the *Khidmat* (Srinagar); of the Pakistan and the Azad Kashmir leaders from (1) the *Dawn* (Karachi), (2) the *Pakistan Times* (Lahore) and (3) the *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore). I am under debt of obligation to the editors of these journals.

Some friends from the Valley and Azad Kashmir supplied me precious, reliable and unpublished information about the political, economic and social conditions in these regions during the past six years. Afraid if their identity is revealed they might be victimised by the men in power I prefer not to mention their names. Nonetheless I am beholden to them for their generous help.

My thanks are due to friends who read the manuscript in parts or all through before it went to the press; particularly I am indebted to S. K. Das, V. B. Karnik and Suyash Malik who made valuable suggestions many of which I have incorporated in the book.

I am obliged to my friend and colleague, Jagan Nath Sathu, who assisted me in correcting the press proofs. He also proposed certain sensible alterations at places which I have carried out.

Lastly I must thankfully mention the unstinted co-operation which the management of the Naya Hindustan Press gave me to get the printing completed in time.

The Author.

BOOK FIRST

BEFORE PARTITION OF INDIA

CHAPTER ONE

FREEDOM MOVEMENT IN EARLY AGES

FREEDOM is a necessity without which an organism cannot grow. Whatever has life in Nature in however a rudimentary form must be free; else it will stagnate, decay and die. Plants, animals and men all struggle for freedom if kept under restrictions in any manner because it is in their nature to remain free or perish. From the very day that Man was born he started his fight for freedom because he found that he could not do as he willed. Forces of Nature thwarted him; therefore he battled against them. Man, nude, shelterless and ignorant was entirely unequipped to face the onslaughts of Nature. So were animals from whom he had descended. But he had one weapon which his arboreal ancestors did not possess; he was endowed with rational thinking; he could retain events in his memory, connect them and draw inferences from them for his own guidance. By constant observation and by making repeated experiences Man was successful in unravelling the deep mysteries of Nature and in defending himself against her vagaries. Thus gradually he learnt to clothe himself, to build houses for residence and to grow food. And in this way civilisation was born.

During the course of this struggle Man realised that as an individual he was not powerful enough to face the mighty Nature and that it was in co-operation with other fellow beings that he could achieve greater success against the dreadful foe. He therefore laid the foundations of the human society as an instrument for progress and promotion of his own happiness. Like all human creations society has proved to be a source of both good and evil. It has doubtless helped Man in his eternal struggle against the vagaries of Nature but it has also become instrumental in bringing him under the bondage of sturdier and stronger but selfish members of society. Since the dawn of civi-

lisation Man has therefore fought on two fronts to keep himself free. He has waged war against the high-handed members of his own society no less than against the blind forces of Nature.

A real freedom movement of any people can neither ignore the one front nor the other. But peculiar circumstances and the exigencies of times can force the fighters for freedom to lay greater emphasis on the one than on the other during different epochs of their history. Evidently it is easier to delve into the mysteries of Nature in a free society than in the one which is under bondage. For that reason the meaning of freedom to the common man in an enslaved country has come to be to live under a social democracy where the least possible restrictions exist on his thinking and movements.

The ideal of freedom and social justice has had several interpretations from age to age. It has developed through the centuries. The conception of freedom that we cherish now was not present in the minds of the people of Kashmir even half a century ago nothing to speak of those who lived in the Valley thousands of years back. Today we are thinking of complete freedom in all spheres of our life. We want to be free politically, socially, culturally, economically and spiritually. Nothing less will satisfy us. In times gone by such was not the case. Our forefathers had their own high ideals; in certain respects they excelled us but in certain others they were far behind the modern age. Some of our ideals were unthinkable for them because they were surrounded by environments in which such ideas could not be born in the minds of men.

How the struggle for freedom started in the Valley of Kashmir, what changes of fortune it saw through the ages and where it stands today is a fascinating story for any student of history.

Hindus have been adversely criticised by foreigners for neglecting to preserve a connected record of their past history. There is paucity of historical material relating to the Hindu period in almost all regions of India. Happily in the case of Kashmir a faithful record of her past has been preserved in the well-known book *Rajtarangini* (River of Kings) in Sanskrit

verse by the learned Brahmin Kalhana who lived in the twelfth century A.C. He is not the first historian of the Valley. Many others had preceded him to whom he is indebted for much of the material that he has used in writing *Rajtarangini*. "I have examined eleven works of former scholars which contain the chronicles of Kings, as well as the doctrine of the sage Nila (i.e. *Nilamatapurana*)", admits Kalhana. Reputed among his predecessors are Helaraja who flourished in the eighth century A.C., Ratnakara who lived in the reign of King Avanti Varman (855-900 A.C.) and Kshemendra of the time of King Kalsa (1063-89 A.C.). One of the ancient historians was Suvrata who condensed the older chronicles in order that their contents might be easily remembered. But, says Kalhana, "Suvrata's poem, though it has acquired fame, is not easily understood being difficult owing to pedantic show of learning". None of these ancient histories except the *Nilamatapurana* is extant.

Kalhana was the son of Lord Champaka who served as a minister of King Harsha (1089-1101 A. C.). Probably the historian himself also held some responsible post in the Government of Kashmir of his own time before he wrote *Rajtarangini*. He was a resident of Parihaspora (modern Paraspore) and a votary of Shaivism but not a believer in the Tantras. His admiration for Buddhism and tolerance for other cults were great.

Kalhana was scrupulous, responsible and careful in writing his chronicles. In his own words "that man of merit alone deserves praise whose language, like that of a judge, in recording the events of the past has discarded bias as well as prejudice". He did all one could to arrive at the veracity of statements and facts recorded by his predecessors. He consulted the early chronicles, biographies and charters, critically examined inscriptions of temples, other public buildings, memoirs of renowned personages, records of land grants, laudatory scrolls, coins, edicts issued at the coronation of former kings, and manuscripts of literary works, before he embarked upon the most difficult task of writing the saga of the Kings of Kashmir. But despite this stupendous labour and the unprecedented precautions he took

in writing *Rajtarangini*, it is unwise to rely on his chronology which is defective due to the errors of the early chroniclers. Kalhana himself appears to be conscious of this defect as he studiously refrains from giving any dates before the year 596 A.C. Till then his narrative is brief and vague. "Without doubt his materials become more plentiful, more detailed and thoroughly historical from the beginning of the Karkota or Naga dynasty which came into power in 596 A. C.", writes the learned R.S. Pandit, the painstaking translator of *Rajtarangini*.[1] The nearer Kalhana approaches his own times the more reliable become his chronicles in the matter of dates and in other respects. Kalhana was a keen observer and a fair-minded historian and looked at political, religious and social problems of the country with a critical, unbiased and objective eye. He has commented fearlessly on the opinions and doings of kings, nobles and common folk not only of ancient Kashmir but also of those living in his own times.

After Kalhana the writing of history was continued. In the time of Zain-ul-Abidin (1421-72 A.C.). Jonaraja and Srivara brought down the narrative to their own day in their respective works known as *Rajavali* and *Jaina-Rajtarangini*. The latter records events till 1486 A.C. At the command of Zain-ul-Abidin, Mulla Ahmed, a courtier, translated Kalhana's *Rajtarangini* into Persian calling it *Bahar-ul-Asmar*. The task was taken up again by Prajnabhat who wrote *Rajavalipataka* in 1512 A.C. and by Shuka whose work *Rajtarangini* was composed in 1596 A.C. With the last named ended the writing of Kashmir history in Sanskrit verse.[2] Among the historians who wrote in Persian distinguished ones are Haider Malik (1659 A.C.), Narain Koul (1710 A.C.), Mohammed Azam (1747 A.C.) and Birbal Kachru (1850 A.C.). The work has been finally completed by several modern writers notably Pirzada Hassan, Prakash Ram, Hargopal Koul, Mohammed Din Fouq, Ghulam Muhyi'd-Din Sufi and others.

[1] *River of Kings*, by R.S. Pandit, Page 597.

[2] The histories written in Sanskrit verse have been translated into English by Jogesh Chandra Dutt and published in three volumes under the title *Kings of Kashmira*.

It was the common belief among antiquarians that there was no stone age in Kashmir. But recent archaeological finds have disproved it as various implements such as standing megaliths, prone monoliths, tomahawk and tumuli have been found at different places such as Pandrethan, Vendrahom, Rangyl, etc. after careful search. But the known history of the civilised man in Kashmir begins, according to Kalhana, from 2450 B.C. when Gonanda I[1] ascended the throne and laid the foundations of the monarchial system of Government in the Valley. In all twenty-one dynasties ruled Kashmir till 1339 A.C. when the Muslims finally captured power and a foreigner, Shah Mir, ascended the throne.

The history of Kashmir opens with an interesting episode. Gonanda I went to war with Krishna of the epic fame on the side of his relative, Jarasandha, King of Magadha. He laid a siege to Mathura but was killed. His son Damodara also suffered the same fate in another attack on Krishna at a *swayamvara* ceremony at Gandhara (now East Afghanistan and N.W.F.P.). Then the dowager queen Yoshovati was installed on the throne.

Very little information is given about the political, social or economic conditions of the people living in this remote and ancient period of Kashmir history. As a matter of fact nothing is known about thirty-five out of fifty-two kings of the earliest dynasties. Kalhana gave them up as lost because their history was not available to him. However one of these lost kings of the Pandu dynasty, Ramdeva by name, is said to have vanquished as many as five hundred kings and brought the whole of the Subcontinent of India from the Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea under his sway.

The Mauryan Emperor Asoka (274 B.C. to 237 B.C.) conquered Kashmir in the middle of the third century before Christ. Probably it was for the first time that the Valley came under foreign domination. But this enslavement did not prove an unmitigated evil because the Mauryan imperialism brought with

[1] There is no truth in the statement that Dayakaran, a raja of Jammu, was invited by quarrelling Brahmins to rule over Kashmir at the dawn of History. Some modern chroniclers have made a statement to this effect to please the present-day Dogra rulers, which is not a historic fact.

it Buddhism to Kashmir. The Vedic Brahminism had degenerated and become an instrument of reaction, cruelty and suppression. The ruling classes headed by a section of short-sighted Brahmins had become demoralised. A story is recorded that in the days of King Sundarasena, God became so annoyed with the evil deeds of the citizens of Sandimatnagar, the capital, that He warned Kattal, the only good man in it, in a dream, to leave the city early next morning. When he did so, Sandimatnagar was submerged along with the king and its inhabitants. The site of the city is now occupied by the Volur lake.

So when Buddhism came with its doctrines of love, piety, universal brotherhood, spiritual discipline, high morals, equality and liberty for all classes and both sexes, the Mauryan imperialism proved a blessing in disguise.

Emperor Asoka was tolerant in the matter of religious views. He allowed the people to practise their own religion and follow their own customs and traditions. But he also despatched Buddhist missionaries to preach the new creed. The first missionary to come to Kashmir was Majjhantika. Many Kashmiris readily accepted the Four Noble Truths and the Eight Rules of Right Conduct. Significantly enough Nagas, an intellectual class though belonging to lower strata of society, were the first to accept the new faith. Progressive Kshatriyas and enlightened Brahmins followed soon. The mass conversions produced revolutionary changes in the political, social and cultural life of Kashmir. The thinking of the community was stirred, the creative forces were released and the lower castes received encouragement and secured freedom which they had never experienced before. It is not known whether Asoka visited the Valley himself but there is a presumption that he did because it was he who for the first time laid the foundations of the present city of Srinagar at the site which is now known by the name of Pandrethan. He also built many viharas and stupas in the Valley. After the death of Asoka Kashmir appears to have regained her independence. He was succeeded by Jalauka whom Kalhana states to be the son of the former. But in Indian history there is no mention of a son of Asoka by

that name ; therefore Jalauka was probably a native king of the Valley. During the reign of Jalauka, Buddhism suffered a reverse in the beginning but later on he was converted to the new faith and built viharas for the bhikshus. Jalauka patronised learning and established Constitutional Government on firm foundations by introducing a Council of Ministers consisting of :

1. the Chief Justice
2. the Superintendent of Revenue
3. the Treasurer
4. the Chief of the Army
5. the Envoy
6. the Pontiff
7. the Astrologer

Jalauka also created eighteen departments of State to administer the country in an organised manner.

The Kushans came to power in India in the beginning of the Christian era. Having conquered the whole of Northern India including Gandhara, Kashgar, Yarqand and Khutan, they brought Kashmir too under their sway. Kanishka (78-123 A.C.) was the most powerful of the Kushans who embraced Buddhism. He was enamoured of Kashmir and not infrequently held his court in the Valley. The chief event of his reign recorded in Buddhist chronicles is a general assembly of the Sangha convened by him under the presidentship of Nagarjuna to settle the strife between the contending Buddhist sects. The meeting place was Kandalvan, a monastery near Shalimar. It was attended by five hundred monks and *arhats* who came from all parts of India and made an exhaustive examination of all authoritative Buddhist literature. The assembly compiled elaborate decisions including a work called *the Mahavibhasha.* The canons of the faith as formulated by the assembly were inscribed on copper plates and were deposited in stone boxes. Then they were put underground and a stupa was built by the Emperor's order over it. The place known to be near Srinagar has not been located so far. Though Vedic religion existed side by side, Buddhism was most popular in the valley during the Kushan period. Kalhana says that Bodhisattva Nagarjuna

was virtually the "sole supreme ruler of the land." To such an extent was politics dominated by religion. It was an era of peace and progress. The Buddhist kings were lovers of learning, art and architecture. They built thousands of viharas, stupas, monasteries and sacred cupolas. Kanishka was succeeded by his sons Havishka (123 A.C.) and Jushka (140 A.C.) who also built cities in their own names.

With the end of Kushan rule in 178 A. C. Buddhism received a set-back in Kashmir. For more than four hundred years the new faith had led the country in awakening the common people and arousing a spirit of defiance in them against obscurantism and social injustice. A dynamic society of free men had taken birth which was absorbed in making original contributions to philosophy, literature, arts, architecture and science. But the reactionaries were not altogether dead. With the rise of the Gonanda dynasty at the end of Kushan rule a reaction definitely set in against Buddhism and attempts were made to revive Brahminism. It must be remembered that by now Buddhism had become corrupt and the Mahayana cult had changed the complexion of the original doctrine to such an extent as to make it almost indistinguishable from Brahminism. That facilitated the task of the opponents who started a campaign to liquidate the libertarian creed of Gautama. But it appears that among the critics of Buddhism were not only reactionary Brahmins but also progressive intellectuals who were not prepared to surrender the social and spiritual liberties that Buddhism had ushered in the Valley. While the former wanted to put the hands of the clock of progress back and revive the social, political and religious conditions that prevailed in the country during the pre-Buddhist days, the progressives saw that not only was it impossible to deprive the people of those liberties in social, political, religious, and intellectual spheres which the Buddhist era had established but that any attempt to do so would prove disastrous. The progressives therefore applied themselves to the task of finding the enduring humanist elements in the philosophy of Buddhism as well as in the holy scriptures of the Brahmins so that with the fu-

sion of both a new dynamic creed may be evolved for the guidance of the people. That religious philosophy came to be known as Shaivism which we shall discuss at its proper place.

Some of the kings of the Gonanda dynasty under the reactionary Brahmins persecuted Buddhists. One of them, King Nara, the sixth in the line, is said "to have burnt down thousands of viharas". This was against the sacred traditions and laboriously built culture of the people. There ensued strife, civil war, and unrest. In such disturbed conditions, as misfortune would have it, an unscrupulous cruel barbarian appeared on the scene who worked havoc in the valley. He was Mihirgula, the Hun.

With the decline of the Gupta Empire in India the Huns consolidated their power in northern India. Tormana, the Hun king, appears to have been a sagacious ruler. But his son Mihirgula proved a fiend. He relentlessly slaughtered and persecuted his Buddhist subjects which aroused the kings of India to combine and attack him. The confederation headed by Baladitya and Yashodharman defeated the Hun army and Mihirgula was taken prisoner. The chivalrous victors, however, generously released him and allowed him to go into exile. To what other place would Mihirgula repair but Kashmir which has always been a refuge for the persecuted and sanctuary for the criminal. Possibly he had also heard of the anti-Buddhist activities which the Kashmir king countenanced that prompted him to go to the valley. But "Mihirgula's brutal character was not bettered by Baladitya's magnanimity," writes Havell. "He took shelter in Kashmir where the raja protected him and gave him and his retinue a small appanage for their maintenance. But at the first opportunity he made a treacherous attack upon his benefactor, seized the kingdom for himself and with the augmented strength which success always brings to tyrants of criminal propensities next invaded Gandhara".[1] There the royal family was exterminated, thousands of non-combatants were massacred, the magnificent Buddhist

[1] *Aryan Rule in India*, by E. B. Havell, Page 362.

viharas and monasteries were plundered by his hordes and laid in ruins.

One can imagine what must have been the lot of Buddhists and freedom loving people in Kashmir when the valley was overrun by barbarians during the time of Mihirgula. It is said that "people knew the approach of the Hun armies by the vultures and crows which flew ahead of them." Kashmiris called Mihirgula by the name of *Trikotiha* (slayer of three crores) and Kalhana says that he was "the terrible enemy of mankind (who) had no pity for children, no compassion for women, no respect for the aged".[1] Once while returning from an expedition an elephant slipped on the Pir Panjal range near Aliabad Sarai and the poor beast fell down the precipice. The dying animal gave a shriek which so pleased Mihirgula that he got all the hundred elephants in the camp pushed down the mountain one by one. The place is called Hastivanj and local people still point out the ridge where the savage king amused himself.

It is interesting to note that Mihirgula favoured a class of Brahmins and built temples to please them. "Evil minded as the tyrant was", says Kalhana, "he yet sought to win religious merit by building Shaiva shrines and endowing Brahmins with monasteries which the lowest of the twice-born (Brahmins), as vile as their protector, did not disdain to accept".[2] Who could these vile creatures among the Brahmins be excepting those who detested the revolution that had been brought about by Buddhism in the social, spiritual and intellectual life of Kashmir and who wanted to take the country back to the pre-Buddhist period.

Overpowered by the sense of his own innumerable misdeeds and the awareness of the opposition of the better mind of Kashmir Mihirgula committed suicide circa 530 A.C.

After Mihirgula the kings of the Gonanda dynasty were restored to the throne. But the bitter experiences at the hands of the cruel Hun awakened in the people of Kashmir an undying urge for freedom. Unbridled despotism and divine claims of the

[1] *Rajtarangini*, i, 293. [2] *Aryan Rule in India*, Page 269.

kings came under severe censure and rebuke of the people. A Council of Ministers was therefore established to keep a strict watch over the powers of the monarchs. A convention of revolutionary significance in the history of Kashmir people's struggle for freedom was laid down according to which the king could be disposed of or even line of accession altered when the interests of the state or its people demanded it. This was a remarkable step. Under influence of the progressive intellectuals, the Kashmiris proclaimed and actually asserted the sovereignty of the people. A theory of state parallel to that of the divine right of kings was born. Thus the last of the Gonanda dynasty, Yudhishthira I, was expelled from his kingdom for misconduct[1] and an outsider Pratapaditya was invited to occupy the throne and assume the rulership for the progress and prosperity of the people. This again brought Kashmir under foreign rule and the suzerainty of Vikramaditya of Ujjain.

The Vikramaditya dynasty ruled Kashmir for 192 years. Jayendra, the last of the dynasty, attempted to become a despot and though his Prime Minister Sandhimati resisted his arbitrary conduct the king continued his misdeeds. Ultimately Jayendra was dethroned by the will of the people and Sandhimati consented to the prayer of the citizens to rule the country.[2]

This change restored the Gonanda dynasty to the throne which remained in power till the last of the line Baladitya died issueless. The dynasty having become extinct, a prince Durlabhvardhan of the Karkota line was installed on the throne of Kashmir.

The centuries that followed the accession to throne of Sandhimati witnessed the golden period in the early ages of the Kashmir history. The conflict between Buddhism and Brahminism had been resolved by the most intelligent method of fusion of the two cultures which flowered in the Shaivite philosophy containing positive achievements of both. The acceptance of the new philosophy by the intellectuals as well as by the masses resulted in the rout of the reactionary Brahmins. It

[1] *River of Kings*, Page 41.
[2] *Rajtarangini*,, ii, 116.

was in this period that Kashmiris produced the noblest of literature in many branches of knowledge. They became famous all over Asia as the most cultured race and teachers of humanity. The learned Kashmiris travelled all over the Subcontinent, went to Tibet, China and abroad overseas preaching the gospel of Buddhism or the philosophy of the new creed Shaivism that they had founded at home. The architecture and sculpture of this period is magnificent and virile. Noble in design and glorious in execution it can favourably compare with architectural achievements of this age in any other civilised part of the world. And lastly it was in this period that the kings of Kashmir excelled as conquerors and proved that they were gifted with the ability to successfully command big armies and that Kashmiris were as brave at wielding arms as they were intelligent in evolving ideas. Hieun Tsiang, Chinese traveller, who visited the valley in 631–33 A.C. wrote : "Kashmiris loved learning and were well instructed".

It is beyond the scope of this book to describe in detail the events, however interesting they may be, of the various rules of the Gonanda (restored) and the Karkota or the Naga dynasties till Avantivarman ascended the throne in 857 A.C. But mention may be made of King Meghvahana, who ruled gloriously for 34 years. He was a staunch believer in non-violence and forbade slaughtering of birds and animals in his kingdom. He was such a zealot in the spread of his creed that he went on an expedition, conquered many countries, including the far distant Ceylon and inflicted the ideology of non-violence on the kings and the peoples of the conquered lands. Other notable monarchs were Praversena I who laid the foundations of the city of Srinagar at the present site and built the first bridge across Vitasta (Jhelum) ; Matri Gupta, the poet, who assumed rulership under curious conditions as protege of Vikramaditya of Ujjain ; Durlabhvardhan in whose time the renowned Chinese traveller Hieun Tsiang visited the valley and lived in it for two years ; Durlabhaka also called Pratapaditya who built Pratapapur (modern Tapar) with its magnificent edifices and temples, and Jayapida who founded Jayapur (modern Anderkot).

The most famous of all the kings of the period is Lalitaditya, also called Muktapida, who ruled Kashmir for 37 years from 695-732 A.C. The country having progressed and prospered by the benefit of more or less good administration for a long period, Lalitaditya raised a big army and trained and organised it for warfare outside Kashmir. He then led several expeditions to northern, eastern and central India subduing, among others, Yasovarman, king of Kanya Kubja (Kanauj) in 720 A.C. He received tribute from the eastern kings and wore the turban of victory in the Antarvedi or the region between the Ganga and the Jamuna. The land of Kanauj from the banks of the Jamuna to the banks of the Kalika came under his sway, as if it had been a yard attached to his house. A little later Lalitaditya seized all the elephants in the kingdom of Gaudas (Bengal). He went on conquering one kingdom after another of the southern peninsula including the "seven Konkans" and the regions to the west. Having brought Bharat Varsha under his sway, Lalitaditya turned his attention towards north-west and trans-Indian regions bordering on Kashmir. He conquered one after another Purushpura, Taxicila, and Gandhara. He proceeded further into Bukhara and Turkistan defeating small and big kings in the way and returned by the north subduing the rulers of Dardistan (modern Gilgit) and Baltistan. The countries lying adjacent to Kashmir such as Jammu, Kashtwat, (Kishtwar), Parnotsa (Poonch), and Rajapuri (Rajouri) were annexed by Lalitaditya to his kingdom but with others he was content to make them own him as their overlord. Lalitaditya was not only a great and good ruler, he was also a brilliant and generous victor. Generally he treated the vanquished rulers with kindness. Except when they were insubordinate or disloyal he never attempted to humiliate them.

Lalitaditya carried on the expeditions of conquest till the very end of his days. Indeed it is said that he disappeared on the Zojila pass while he was returning from one of these expeditions which he led towards Aryanaka (Persia). He remained absent from the country most of the time and it is remarkable that Kashmir was well governed according to the standard of

that time by the council of ministers as there was neither any discontent among the people nor any attempt at usurpation of the throne. Kalhana says that the king's Prime Minister, Shankuna, filled his treasury with gold with his magical powers. This shows that the country must have been prosperous enough to enable the Government to collect huge revenue for the State. But this prosperity was confined to the upper classes and the condition of the exploited masses did not differ in essential respects from serfdom. While the courtiers had "fried-meats" and "delightful light wine cooled with ice and perfumed with flowers" the food of the common people was, rice and *hakh* (Sanskrit *Shaka*).[1]

In one of his expeditions Lalitaditya met Bhavabhuti the famous poet of Vidharba. A lover of learning, the king brought him to his court.

Lalitaditya was not without blemishes in his character. He was a drunkard and would commit acts of folly and injustice when under the influence of liquor. It is related that in one such moment while living at Parihaspura, a city built by himself, he caused the king of Gaudas (Bengal) to be murdered in Trigami. Lalitaditya governed Kashmir adopting machiavellian principles. In a kind of instrument of instructions to his council of ministers, he is reported to have observed, that "those, who dwell there in the mountains difficult of access, should be punished even if they give no offence ; because, sheltered by these fastnesses, they are difficult to break up if they have accumulated wealth. Every care should be taken that people in the villages should not be left with more food supply than required for the year's consumption, or more oxen than wanted for the tillage of the fields, because, if they keep more wealth, they would become in a single year very formidable Damaras (feudal lords) and strong enough to neglect the commands of the kings".[2] Lalitaditya was of the view that cultivator's style of living must be lower than that of the city dweller, that offices should not he held by family cliques and

[1] *River of Kings*, Page XXVIII.

[2] *Rajtarangini*, IV, 246—48.

that troops should not be raised from a single district. Some of the views are doubtless anti-social, reactionary and unbecoming of the great monarch that Lalitaditya was. Possibly the prosperous conditions of the feudal lords frightened him ; possibly he needed more and more money for his military exploits. But, in any case, such views about the administration have to some extent neutralised the great achievements to the credit of the famous king.

Lalitaditya introduced certain constitutional reforms and created new offices of High Chamberlain, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Master of the Horses, Keeper of the Treasury and Chief Executive Officer in addition to the old ones. For the first time in the history of the valley, he executed drainage works on an extensive scale which brought large fertile tracts of land out of water for cultivation. Consequently food supply became abundant.

From Kushan times the people of Kashmir were closely associated with the people of Gandhara and other lands in the north. It appears that Lalitaditya and his predecessors had family connections with the Hindu Turks of this region. His Prime Minister, Shankuna, and some other high placed officials belonged to these countries.

Lalitaditya was a great builder. Wherever he went he built towns and cities, and erected temples in them dedicated to different deities. At the successful completion of each expedition he would either lay the foundation of a new town or get a temple constructed. He was a Shaivite by faith but evinced equal regard for Buddhism. "He is the most conspicuous figure in the history of Kashmir", writes Sufi "He raised his country to a pitch of glory it had never reached before. The ruins of the temple at Martanda about five miles from Anantnag or Islamabad, and of his city, Parihaspura, fourteen miles from Srinagar, bear eloquent testimony to his greatness".[1]

The great nation remembered Lalitaditya for many centuries after his death. Alberuni, the famous Muslim traveller who accompanied Mahmud Gaznavi in the eleventh century, re-

[1] *Kashir*, Volume I, Page 52.

cords that the Kashmiris of his time celebrated annually a certain day as festival in commemoration of Lalitaditya's victories.

Lalitaditya's successors proved to be selfish, greedy and incapable men. They were puppets in the hands of the feudal lords who were all the time quarrelling with each other. Within half a century, one by one all these countries which had been annexed by the great conqueror, declared their independence. That would not be regrettable. But the misfortune was that inside Kashmir there was disorder due to maladministration and misgovernment. Fortunately at such a juncture another great king in the history of Kashmir ascended the throne in 855 A. C. He was Avantivarman who should be considered noblest of all the rulers because his greatest ambition was to raise the people culturally and socially and he did not aspire to be a conqueror at the cost of the progress of his own homeland.

In Avantivarman's time, the valley was inundated and water-logged so that very small area of land was available for cultivation. Floods and famines had become annual visitations and people were dying by hundreds for want of food. Wisely did Avantivarman devote his sole attention to the economic condition of the people. Fortunately the king secured the services of a genius in Engineering named Suyya. The parentage of this great man is unknown. Probably he was an illegitimate child of some unfortunate woman as he was found in a new earthen pot with a lid in a dust heap on the street by a Chandala (outcaste) woman who adopted him. Suyya's deep and wide knowledge of irrigation engineering enabled him to rightly attribute the cause of flood to the silt which had accumulated at the bed of Vitasta below Baramulla where the river leaves the valley and enters the rocks. He therefore got the silt cleared and also drained a large part of the Vitasta. He raised solid stone embankments on either side of the river, wherever needed. Having successfully completed this work of primary importance, Suyya next devoted his energies to framing other irrigation projects for the welfare of the people. He

diverted the rivers and "after examining various kinds of soil, he supplied the villages with water of viaducts from the river removing their dependence solely on rain."[1] Thus a vast area of culturable land was reclaimed and the people got plenty of food to eat. Within a decade he changed the face of the valley from a miserable-looking and poverty-stricken country to a prosperous land. Kalhana says that the paddy which was sold for 1050 dinnars a *khari* (khirwar or about two maunds) previously became available at 36 dinnars a *khari* after Suyya had executed his marvellous schemes of engineering. Even during times of great abundance the purchase price of a *khari* of paddy had been two hundred dinnars in the valley.

Suyya's services to Kashmir have never been properly and fittingly evaluated. He was one of the truly great personalities of the times of whom Kashmiris can rightly feel proud. He was of doubtful birth, an adopted son of a poor outcaste girl. All haughty, high-brow men and powerful exploiters in the society were bent upon opposing and foiling him. It is not surprising that when he presented his plan to Avantivarman the courtiers with one voice derisively commented upon it. He was considered crazy. Reactionary Brahmins particularly were determined to destroy him. They could not brook to see a low-caste man doing work that only a genius could accomplish. But Suyya firmly stood his ground and through sheer perseverence ultimately won. Even after he had achieved success his opponents presented his schemes in a clumsy and grotesque manner. They said that the Engineer took boat-loads of money to places on Vitasta and dropped heaps of coins into the river[2] so that famished and stricken people in their attempts to find the sunken wealth would desilt the river. It was nothing of the sort. Suyya's plans were based on sound principles of Engineering and he proved to be the master craftsman to carry them out. Doubtless he spent huge sums on drainage which proved to be a wise investment in the long run. His opponents declared it to be waste like throwing money into water. It must however be

[1] *Rajtarangini* V, 109.

[2] Ibid V, 116-117.

acknowledged that Avantivarman possessed the fair sense of recognising merit wherever he found it. That helped Suyya and enabled him to perform his wonderful feats.

In recognition of his services to the State a town was founded in the name of the Great Engineer. It is called Suyyapur (modern Sopore).

When the economic condition of the people was improved and order restored in the country, Avantivarman bestowed his attention upon the revival of Art and Architecture. He founded the town of Avantipura and built two temples near it. He attracted men of learning to his court. Eminent among them were Shivaswamin, Ratnakara, Anandvardhan and Kallata Bhat.

With the death of Avantivarman in 884 A.C. a long dark age started in Kashmir. History of almost all those who succeeded to the rulership of the country till finally the Hindu monarchs became extinct, is a black record of shameful deeds hardly ever relieved by any silver line of meritorious action.

There is nothing notable to mention during this period except that a powerful, ambitious but unscrupulous queen Didda, daughter of the Shahi dynasty of Gandhara, ruled the country from 980-1003 A.C. As a matter of fact she was at the helm of political affairs for nearly half a century. She was the power behind the throne when from 950-58 A.C. her husband Kshemgupta ruled. She became Regent from 958-72 while her minor son Abhimanyu was nominally on the throne. She ultimately became the ruler in 980 A.C. in her own right after she got her two minor grandsons Nandigupta (972-73 A.C.) and Tribhuvana (973-975 A.C.) secretly assassinated one after the other and a third one Bhimgupta (975-980 A.C.) imprisoned for flouting her authority. Didda was a strong-willed person who put down all opposition to her with ruthlessness.

In 1015 A.C. Mahmud Gaznavi invaded Kashmir. The Kashmiri troops faced the invader at Lohara near Rajouri. The mighty conqueror was resisted and repulsed. Owing to inclement weather, Mahmud had to return without fulfilling the ambition of conquering the valley. This was the only expedi-

tion of the Emperor, which proved unsuccessful. It was in the reign of Sangramraja (1003-1023 A.C.) that Anandpal, after his defeat at the hands of Mahmud, sought shelter in the valley.

Here end the early ages in Kashmir and we will now enter into the medieval times. We have described the ups and downs in the political life of our people from earliest times. It is meet that we should know something about their cultural achievements for no history of a freedom movement can be complete without a knowledge of its cultural side.

CHAPTER TWO

CULTURAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF ANCIENTS

IT is no easy task to state correctly the social and economic conditions of the people of Kashmir during the earlier ages. The available historical material on the subject is very meagre. It is obvious that the lives led by Hindu Kings were, generally speaking, simple. Their wants were few and their own economic and social lives were not far removed from those of ordinary men. Hieun Tsiang, the Chinese traveller who visited Kashmir during the reign of Durlabh Vardhan (617-53 A.C.) found the people prosperous and peaceful though at the same time he called them "light and frivolous and of a weak and pusillanimous disposition."

It is remarkable that in the discharge of public duties the Kashmir queens have distinguished themselves as well as the kings. Seclusion or veiling of women was unknown even among the upper classes and royalty in ancient Kashmir. The queens as well as the kings were sprinkled with the sacred waters of the coronation. The queens had their own councillors and treasurers. They took active part in the governance of the country side by side with the kings. Some of them ruled independently and with firmness. Mention has already been made of Rani Yashovati who came to the throne at the dawn of history. About her Kalhana observes that "the eyes of men which viewed womankind with scant courtesy as the objects of their pleasure, looked upon this mother of her subjects as if she were a goddess".

Queen Sugandha ruled Kashmir just at the beginning of the tenth century. A notable queen was Suryamati who made the rule of her husband Ananta (1028-63 A.C.) a success when the rebellion of the feudal lords had all but deposed him. Finding Ananta weak to govern and realising that the country

needed a strong administration she forced him to abdicate in favour of his son Kalsha. Of queen Didda who, like Razia Begum, scandalised her courtiers through her illegitimate intimacy with a Gujjar named Tunga but unlike the latter survived the deed, we have already taken note. Kalhana's *Rajtarangini* mentions scores of women, including queens, who played by no means insignificant roles in the politics of Kashmir. We find that in early times in Kashmir "women had emerged from the domestic into the political stage, were free, owned immovable property, managed their own estates and even fought at the head of their troops". In describing the women of Kashmir, their beauty and accomplishments, the poet Bilhana tells us that they spoke Sanskrit fluently.

As an achievement of the continued struggle for freedom during the Buddhist and Hindu periods, kings had been divested of much of their autocratic power. The traditional authority of the Supreme Council of the State consisting of ministers and feudal lords was recognised. It was under this authority that dozens of monarchs who had proved unfit to rule were deposed and replaced by candidates with the needed qualifications and merit. Even during peaceful times it was this Council of State which decided the succession to kingship in a disputed case. When the Gonanda dynasty became extinct it was through the election by the ministerial council, as representing the voice of the people, that a prince of the Karkota line was consecrated with sacred water poured out from golden jars.[1] In the disturbed and unsettled times of the tenth century Kashmir, a notable incident has been recorded by Kalhana which occurred in or about 939 A.D. when Commander-in-Chief Kamala Vardhan was in a position to seize the throne for himself by armed might. He hesitated and was anxious to win public opinion to his side. He called the progressive Brahmins, the representatives of the intellectual class, together and canvassed them in his desire for election to the throne. "Make a countryman of yours, strong and full-grown king", he beseeched.

[1] *Rajtarangini*, ii, 528.

"To the historian the interest lies, firstly, in the fact that in spite of the corruption and violence of the times, an appeal was made to the traditional law of kingship instead of to the force of arms", observes E.B. Havell, "and secondly, in the unexpected result of the Assembly's vote, which was that Kamala Vardhan's claims were set aside in favour of a Brahmin candidate, Yashaskara who was duly consecrated as king by the ancient vedic rite of abhisheka and reigned for forty-seven years afterwards".[1]

It is true that public opinion in the modern sense did not exist in ancient Kashmir but doubtless feudal lords, wealthy nobles, intellectual classes, groups of artisans and Brahmins in general were exerting tremendous influence on the administration as well as on the conduct of the ruler. As soon as a king became unpopular in the eyes of the people and if he could not be deposed constitutionally or by ordinary peaceful methods, risings and rebellions were organised and the king made to feel the force of adverse public opinion. Deposition of kings by the people is as well known to Kashmir history as usurpation of the throne by court intrigues or by *coup d' tat*. Many sections of masses took prominent part in such risings. They were led by Damaras (Feudal Lords), Nyayakas (Village Headmen) and similar wealthy or politically conscious classes. There were other factions like Tantrins (the Praetorians) and the Ekangas (the Gendarmes) who supported the royal authority and guarded the palace and the king's person. There can be no doubt that the fear of these risings produced a healthy and wholesome check on the conduct of the kings. As in every other country during early times, the Church and the State worked hand in hand in Kashmir. But it is interesting to note that in case of difference the Brahmin leaders of the church resorted to hunger strike and passive resistance to get their grievances redressed. Kashmiris in early ages were freedom-lovers and intensely patriotic. But their patriotism was not aggressive, nor did they become unjust in their love

[1] *Aryan Rule in India*, Page 275.

for their national heroes and great men. My country right or wrong was none of their mottoes. Mention has been made of the assassination of the king of Gaudas at Trigami under command of Lalitaditya. The followers of the murdered king travelled all the way from their homeland to Kashmir to avenge the death of their master. On reaching Srinagar they attacked a temple and rooted out the god Ranaswami and broke it to pieces because it was the most favourite god of Lalitaditya. Kalhana justifying the action of the Gaudians, observes, as a believer in human justice, that "the world is filled with the renown of the heroes of the Gaudian country who sacked it (Ranaswami) in revenge of their master's death."[1]

The economic life of the people must have been very simple. The only source of production was land. There were no big industries and no extensive arts and crafts. Cultivators had to pay one-tenth of the produce of their land to the State. But the condition of the common people as disclosed in the *Rajtarangini* was not a happy one. Owing to the eternal strife between the kings and the feudal barons on the one hand and by the tyranny of the bureaucrats on the other the people were crushed. Fiscal extortion was another demon which destroyed them. It is however notable that neither birth nor caste was a bar to the holding of any civil or military office. The Brahmin and the Domb (a low caste) alike could be soldiers as well as Rajputras, the professional warriors. Some of the best and bravest generals and expert swordsmen have been Brahmins who have also ruled the country from time to time. King Chakravarman (923-933 A.C.) married an untouchable Domba woman and made her the premier queen. She entered the famous sacred temple of Vishnu near Srinagar to which, followed by the feudatory nobles, she paid a visit in state. Her relatives held high posts and, says Kalhana, "orders issuing forth from the mouth of the Dombas became like royal commands difficult to transgress and were not transgressed by anyone".

Though the ancient Hindu society was caste-ridden and

[1] *Rajtarangini*, V, 325-30.

inequality was the pivot on which it stood it is remarkable that slavery did not form any of its part. The common people in Kashmir were doubtless living lives not far removed from serfdom but they were not slaves. Kalhana has expressed his horror of the slave trade of the Malechhas (Barbarians) and in doing so he was reflecting the public view of his own age.

The Damaras (modern Dars) were the most influential feudal lords with whom the kings and members of the royal family formed matrimonial alliances. But the Damara was not a hereditary rank monopolised by a selected few. The status of a Damara was one to which a member of any caste could raise himself through labour after acquiring wealth and influence.

From immemorial times Kashmir has been, for two reasons, a great seat of learning and art. First, the valley is geographically situated on the map where the borders of as many as six countries meet. It was through Kashmir that the travellers and traders from and to all these lands passed bringing with them, besides merchandise, the ideas and arts that flourished in those lands. Secondly, the salubrious climate and the enchanting scenic beauties of the valley attracted thinkers, scholars, artists, architects and builders from many parts of Asia to visit the fairy land. Some of them would not leave the valley after they had once seen it, so enthralled they were. Like Nagarjuna they made Kashmir their adopted homeland. Naturally the most lovely surroundings accelerated their powerful faculties for creative work and they made glorious contributions to the already existing vast store house of knowledge in the valley. Thus it was that the Kashmir culture was continuously enriched and it reached new heights as centuries passed by.

There was scarcely any branch of learning which the people of Kashmir had not studied and to which they did not make their own original contributions. In philosophy, religion, medicine, astronomy, literature, engineering, sculpture, architecture, painting, music, dancing and in many other walks of life the progress of Kashmiris during the early ages was striking and when compared with our present pitiable condition simply mar-

vellous. It is not within the scope of this book to discuss in detail all the achievements of our forefathers but as a part of the Freedom Movement notice has to be taken in passing of some of their outstanding cultural accomplishments.

Ancient Kashmiris were Naga (snake) worshippers and followed the religion of the Vedas to a large extent. But other creeds of the antiquity such as Zorastrianism, Confuscianism and the religion of the Jews were not unknown to them. When Buddhism was imported into the valley during the rule of Asoka, they cheerfully adopted it. The doctrine of Lord Buddha remained a popular religion in the valley for several centuries. Its decline and final disappearance from Kashmir as from India as a separate religious cult were the result of a process of gradual intellectual absorption. Learned Kashmiris served as missionaries of Buddhism and carried the teachings of Gautama to China and many other distant lands. The priest Kumarajiva who studied the Vedas and the Hinayana Buddhist doctrine in Kashmir was honoured by the title of Tungsheo (one though young in years is ripe in wisdom) by a monarch of the Ching dynasty (284-417 A.C.) for the services which he rendered to the cause of learning. Another savant was Prince Gunavardhan of Kashmir who settled in China and painted Jataka stories at Canton. Kashmir Buddhists also carried the torch of the Faith to Tibet and as distant a country as Yadavdwip (Sumatra). Prince Gunavardhan before going to China landed at this island. Here he converted the ruling queen to Buddhism who in her turn converted her family and thousands of her subjects to the Faith. The people of Khotan ascribed their conversion to a Bodhisattva called Vairocana who had come from Kashmir.

But the greatest contribution to the evolution of Buddhism, that changed its entire complexion and made it a popular religion of the masses, was made by Nagarjuna, who flourished in the first century B.C. By birth this great thinker belonged to Berar, but early in his age he made Kashmir his home and settled at Sadarhadvana (modern Harwan), a village 12 miles distant from Srinagar. "Nagarjuna was the Luther of Buddhism, the apostle of bhakti-marga, who would find means of expression

for the deep-seated religious instincts of the masses through the way of devotion to the Divine Teacher, rather than through the dry agnostic philosophy of the Hinayana Schools", writes Havell.[1] Nagarjuna is the author of the radical school of the Mahayanist Buddhism which is called the Madhyamika, the Middle Way. It no doubt made Buddhism a popular creed over the greater part of Asia but in the land of its birth the Faith lost that revolutionary fervour which characterised it during the first few centuries after the death of Lord Buddha. The Mahayana opened the path for Brahminism to absorb the heretic creed and make it as one among so many castes of Hinduism. But these vicissitudes in the fate of the Sangha have not affected the greatness of Nagarjuna in the Buddhist pantheon. He has been raised to the exalted position of Bodhisattva and enjoys the reputation of being the greatest thinker of the age. The powerful critical philosophy of Nagarjuna has been revived by Japanese commentators of the modern times. Kalhana tells us that the dialectics of Nagarjuna's critical philosophy destroyed the primitive beliefs of the people of Kashmir as it cut at the roots of the religious rites prescribed in the *Nilamatpurana.*

Equally remarkable if not more important than the establishment of the Madhyamika School, is the evolution of a new religious philosophy by the Kashmiri philosophers during the centuries following the one when Nagarjuna flourished. It is the glorious outcome of the fusion of the ancient Vedic and the Buddhist cultures. This indigenous system of philosophy is markedly different from other known systems of philosophies in India. It is called Kashmir *Shaivism* (as distinct from the Shaivism of south India) or the *Trika Shastra* (the three fold science) or simple *Trika* (the triple). As the name implies this philosophy pertains to the three vital matters of greatest importance namely (a) man (b) his universe and (c) the fundamental principle which keeps on restoring order, equilibrium and harmony in the universe where it is disturbed and disrupted by constant change. Though dealing with all the three in larger or lesser degrees the *Trika* is particularly interested in

[1] *Aryan Rule in India*, Page 141.

man and his personality. Shaivism considers *Swatantrya*(complete freedom) as the one and the final goal of human life. This goal it calls the Ultimate Reality beyond which nothing exists. Shiva, the Lord,is another name for independence. The only reality of the universe is Shiva who is infinite consciousness and unrestricted independence. He has many other features like omnipresence, eternality and formlessness though independence is peculiar to him. "Our bondage is due to ignorance", say the *Shiv Sutras.* "Though the soul is infinite consciousness man thinks 'I am finite', though independent he thinks 'I am the finite body' ", observes Kshemendra in his comments on the *Shiv Sutras.* "The soul forgets that the world has existence only in Shiva and that the soul is identical with the Lord".

The *Trika* describes consciousness of man as the Atman, the nuclear core, which is the enternal and one witness of all that is undergoing ceaseless change namely the body, mind, and spirit composed of thoughts, feelings and emotions which are subject to growth and decay. In this philosophy the word for change is "speeding". The aim of the *Trika Shastra* is to awaken man to the fact that this Atman, the Witness, is no other than the Shiva, the All powerful Lord of the Universe. A second to Shiva there is none.

Of the Indian philosophies it is the Sankhya system of Kapila which has analysed man's personality in detail and discovered twenty-five elements composing it. The *Trika* has gone deeper and found no less than thirty-six principles. It has laid open new layers of consciousness and regions of the sub-conscious states. And the system does not rest with mere delineation of the principles. In addition to the detailed analysis of man's physical, psychic, psychological, spiritual and mental personality the *Trika* teaches the exact method of knowing these constituent parts by direct experience, that is by realizing them as facts and not mere figments of imagination.

The *Trika Shastra* is the synthesis of the essential things that are to be found in almost all the Indian philosophies plus the knowledge gained by the Kashmiri thinkers with their own observations and experience. It is an intelligent synthesis of

all that is abiding, universal and enduring in the Vedanta, the Sankhya, the Vaisheshika, the Nyaya and the Vinaya of Buddha; it also contains the core of Vaishnava and Shakta teachings, especially the gospel of supreme love and all absorbing devotion for the beloved. "Shiva is the subject as well as the object, the experiences as well as the experienced".[1]

In Shaivism beauty is another name for morally good and the power responsible for creation is the Most Beautiful. Love, Truth and Beauty are the different names of one and the same thing.

The *Trika* philosophy is characterised by absolute monism, depth of thought and originality. Essentially it is an idealist philosophy unrelenting in its analysis and logic; but it does not shirk realism, the objective reality of the world.

According to Shaiva philosophy, Soul is of the same nature as consciousness; there is no difference between the individual soul and the universal soul. Therefore the doctrine of the plurality of souls is denied in the *Trika Shastra*. While synthesising the previous systems of Indian philosophy the Kashmiri thinkers sedulously avoided to include barren parts represented by negativism, escapism and unemotionalism of the Upanishadic Vedanta. In Shaivism there is no Maya, the principle which creates illusory forms. Even the existence of a promoting cause, *Karma*, or a material cause *Prakriti* is not admitted. Shiva is absolutely independent and creates all that exists under the influence of desire by the mere force of His will. He makes the world appear in Himself as if it were distinct from Himself though it is not so really; even as objects appear in a mirror, God is as unaffected by the objects of His creation as the mirror is by the images reflected in it.[2] In *Trika* Shiva is represented as the symbol of the external process of destruction and creation. Shiva is Bhairava (Terrible) and also Kala (Time Destroyer). He is at the same time instinct, love. The Shaivism has no use for self-mortification as a way to Realization.

[1] *Spanda Karika*, Page 5.

[2] *Indian Philosophy* by Dr Radhakrishnan, Vol. II, Page 732.

The *Trika* literature is divided into three parts namely (a) the Agama Shastra, that is the science which has come down from remote antiquity. The origin of the books of this class is unknown; they are believed to have been the discourses between Shiva and Shakti, (b) the Spanda Shastra, the science of the universe as ever changing or "speeding" phenomena and (c) the Pratyabhijna Shastra, the science of Recognition. The last is also often called the Ishvara Pratyabhijna Shastra that is the Science of the Recognition of Lord (Shiva).

The system of Shaivism was first founded by Vasugupta in the eighth century A. C. and the first book on the subject which has come down to us is *Shiva Sutra Vimarshini*, an Agama Shastra. The legend has it that, as revealed to him in a dream, Vasugupta found the Sutras inscribed on a rock called Shankar Pal. He copied them without delay and taught them to his disciples. This rock has been located but the inscription is no more traceable. Vasugupta himself wrote *Spanda Karika*, an important book on the subject. After him followed many other thinkers of eminence who either made original contributions to the *Trika* philosophy or wrote commentaries on Agama Shastras or the works of their predecessors.

Vasugupta's disciple Kalatta Bhat composed *Spanda Vritti* in the ninth century. Soon after came Somananda, a great genius, the founder of Pratyabhijna School, with his dazzling treatise the *Shivadrashti*. Utpaladeva whose books *Pratyabhijna* and *Stotravali* are given a place of authority on the subject lived in the tenth century. The most prolific, profound and versatile thinker on Shaivism is Abhinavagupta who was born between 950 and 960 A.C. He was a literary critic and the greatest exponent of the Shaiva philosophy and has written a number of books including commentaries and many original works. His monumental production the famous *Tantraloka* is rightly called the encyclopaedia of the monistic idealism of Kashmir. It comprises 5,800 stanzas and is divided into 37 chapters. For those who could not "enter into" the widely extensive Tantra loka, Abhinavagupta composed *Tantra Sara* which, as he says, is "composed of easy words". Another book by him

is *Parmartha Sara*, an admirable and beautiful synthesis of Sankhya and Vedanta systems of philosophy. Besides being a philosopher Abhinavagupta was a voluminous writer on several other subjects—Dramaturgy, Rhetoric and Philosophy of Poetry. Abhinavagupta had thousands of followers among the intellectuals in the valley and there is a tradition that he, along with twelve hundred of his disciples, walked into the Bhairava cave near Magam and was never seen again.

Other important writers on Shaivism were Kshemendra, Kshemraja, Jayaratha and Yogaraja.

In connection with Shaivism two points are of great interest to us living in the modern age of democracy and freedom. They throw much light on the culture of Kashmir of the centuries when the *Trika* philosophy was born and flourished. First, it is remarkable that almost all the Shaiva philosophers have laid emphasis on the fact that the *Trika* in both of its aspects, as a system of philosophy as well as an applied science, is meant for all human beings without any distinction of sex, creed, caste or colour. No one is to be deprived of the knowledge of Truth or the practice of realising the Ultimate Reality, the Complete Freedom. Indeed Abhinavagupta has clearly laid it down that "a man must have a woman as messenger" for communion with the all Powerful "who must be treated as one's equal and with honour"; otherwise he has no right to take part in any religious rites or rituals. Further "a woman devoted to the principles of the *Trika* will succeed in achieving the same *siddhi* in twelve days" as will take men, if they have the least fear in their hearts, twelve long months."[1] The second notable point in the *Trika* philosophy is that it clearly forbids suppression of any thought however strongly in opposition to Shaivism. The *Swachhand Tantra* of Kshemendra directs that "no genuine follower of *Trika* should have any quarrel with another system of thought and worship".

It was only recently that the store-house of the philosophical literature of Shaivism came to the notice of the outside world by the efforts of the State Research Department. It is

[1] *Tantraloka* I, 13.

now attracting the attention of many eminent thinkers and scholars some of whom consider it more synthetic and profound than all the other known works on religious philosophies of the world. In the words of Rabindra Nath Tagore the *Trika* "has penetrated into that living depth of thought where diverse currents of human wisdom unite in a luminous synthesis."

The intellectual labour of the Kashmiri thinkers of the early ages was not confined to the spheres of philosophy and religion. They wrote on many other subjects. Works on literature are numberless. Among the important ones mention may be made of Bhim Bhatta's *Ravanarjuniya* (700 A.C.) Domodra Gupta's *Kuttni Mata* (760 A.C.) Kshiraswami's *Lexicon* (800 A.C.) Ratnakar's *Harivijaya* (850 A.C.) Sri Swami's *Kapphanabhyudaya* (850 A.C.) Valabha Deva's commentaries on Kalidas's works (900 A.C.) Soma Deva's *Kathasaritsagara* (1000 A.C.), Mankha's *Sri Kanth Charita* (1160 A.C.) and Jayadratha's *Hari Charita Chintamani* (1200 A.C.).

Kshemendra who lived in the period 990-1065 A.C. was a versatile genius. He was of wealthy parentage, well educated and had travelled extensively in India. Though born in a Shaiva family he studied Vaishnavaism and was drawn towards it. He also esteemed Buddhism very highly.

Kshemendra was a lover of the stage and a frequent playgoer. His studies were wide and extended to Law, Grammar, Ayurveda, Politics, Music and Painting. He also knew carpentry and smithy. He was the tutor to the heir-apparent Kalasa. No less than thirty-four books written by him are extant. Among them is *Desopadesa* which delineates vividly the moral and political evils rampant in his own days. It gives a glimpse into the history of Kashmir of his times. Kshemendra is bitterly satirical of the government officials. His style is that of Voltaire and his book *Narmamala* is a remarkable work in this style. Another of his books *Darpadalana* (Pride has fall) is also well known. Kshemendra was the first person to render into Sanskrit the monumental work of Gunadhya, the *Brahat Katha* or Great Story, which was composed in the first century of the Christian Era in *Pishacha* dialect

(ancient Pushto) and consisted of 1,00,000 slokas. One of Kshemendra's beautiful and lucid poems is *Samayamatrika* which describes the progress of a courtesan throughout Kashmir. The poem is strikingly original in conception.

Another great poet was Bilhana who was born in 1078 A.C. at Khunamuh near Srinagar. He is a romantic figure. Finding no scope for his talents in Kashmir he went down to the plains at the early age of 16. He travelled through the whole of northern and central India gathering fame for his intellectual attainments. At Kalyani in the Deccan he was asked by the raja to teach the princess. Soon the teacher and the pupil fell in love with each other. With the raja's permission they married. Bilhana's love for his homeland however brought him back to Khunamuh where he died at the venerable age of 80 years. Among his works that have survived are (1) *Vikramankdev Charita* (2) *Karnasundari Mala* (3) *Chaurpanchashika.* The first named begins with the origin of Chalukya dynasty of the south and praises the king who ruled at the time. It contains eight cantoes and in the last Bilhana gives a history of his own family and a short account of the kings of Kashmir. Bilhana's poetry is lucid , simple and charming but he is no good at history. He has given a graphic and beautiful picture of the Srinagar of his own days. Bilhana repeatedly asserts that saffron is the inspirer of poetry and as this plant does not grow anywhere outside Kashmir therefore true poetry cannot be produced anywhere else but in the valley of Kashmir.

The great Patanjali was, according to some scholars, born in Kashmir before the dawn of the Christian era. Besides him other grammarians have flourished in the valley, notable among whom are Chandra in the second century, A.C., Kshiraswami and Vamana in the reign of Jayapida (774-808 A.C.) and Kayyata (950 A.C.) who wrote the *Laghuvritti.*

Many books have been written by distinguished authors on Alankar Shastra (Poetics). Out of the sixteen most famous rhetorians of ancient India Kashmir has produced no less than fourteen. Outstanding among them were (1) Vamana Bhatta who wrote *Kavyalankara* in 750 A.C. and was the founder of

the Riti School, (2) Udbhata (774-813 A.C.) the teacher of the theory of three *vrittis,* (3) Rudratha who composed *Srinagartilaka* in 825 A.C., (4) Abhinava Gupta the great expounder of the theory of *Rasadhvani,* (5) Ruyyaka (1125 A.C.) who wrote *Alankara Sarvasva* and (6) Mammata (1150 A.C.) who upheld the Rasa theory in his inimitable work *Kavyaprakasa.* Eighty-seven commentaries of which 25 are available, are known to have been written on the last named book. Mammata occupies a very high position in the literary firmament of Kashmir in the beginning of twelfth century. He belonged to the village Galandar. He had two brothers Jaiyata and Uvvata and all the three were noted literateurs.

Kalhana mentions Ashvaghosha, the celebrated author of *Buddhacharita,* as a resident of Kashmir. It is said that Kanishka acquired him as part of war indemnity and after profusely honouring him provided him with a suitable residence in the valley to peacefully carry on his literary pursuits. Ashvaghosha was a poet, musician, scholar, religious controversialist and a zealous Buddhist preacher.

Some research scholars believe that Kalidasa was a native of Kashmir because of his various references to scenes and events in his dramas and poems which could have occurred nowhere else but in Kashmir.

Two famous writers on medical science who flourished during the Hindu period were Charaka and Narhari. There was a controversy about the birth-place of the former but the discovery of some Buddhistic literature in China has set the doubts at rest. It has proved that Charaka flourished in the rule of Kanishka in first century A.C. and was a native of Kashmir. His book *Charaka Sanhita* contains eight chapters and deals not only with the diagnosis, prognosis, therapy and anatomy but with remedies and diet as well. It also gives elaborate instructions for guidance of doctors and students of medicine besides dealing with the main diseases found among human beings.

Nagarjuna, the founder of Mahayana Buddhism, was a chemist of great repute. He was one of the first propounders of the *Rasayan* and made use of Chemistry in the ameliora-

tion of human suffering. He possessed great medical and pharmaceutical acumen and had wide knowledge of drugs and medicines. He recast whole of the *Sushruta Samhita* and added the last portion known as Uttar Tantra to it. He was well practised in the art of compounding medicines and prepared pills by taking which one could prolong his life for many years so that neither the mind nor appearance decayed. Besides himself, one king, Satvahraja, is said to have partaken of this mysterious medicine.

The authorship of the famous treatise *Rasaratnakara* which is in the form of a dialogue is attributed to Nagarjuna. "Nagarjuna's outstanding contributions to India's chemical knowledge", says G.P. Srivastva of the Department of Pharmaceutics of the Banaras Hindu University, "rightly entitle him to be styled as the father of Indian Chemistry.....That he was one of the earliest Indian alchemists and that the credit of having invented the process of distillation, sublimation, calcination, colouring and alloying of metals, extraction of copper from pyrites and use of metal oxides in medicine etc., is only due to venerable Nagarjuna, is admitted on all hands. He is also accredited with having introduced *kajalli* or the black sulphite of mercury into medicinal use."[1]

Nagarjuna had profound faith in the efficacy of the Science of Chemistry. He has said: "As long as the Science of Chemistry prevails let not pain and pestilence torment men."

Astrology has been a special study of Kashmir Brahmins. The works of Bhaskaracharya, Aryabhatta and Ratnakantha are quoted as authorities by all those who follow the Indian system of Astronomy.

Admirers of Freud and those who believe sex impulse to be the main driving force in the behavior of human beings and dangerous to be ignored or suppressed will be interested to learn that Kashmiri writers applied their mind to this problem from very early times. Several books have been written on the subject. Mention may be made of two of them : one was written by Vasunanda in the fourteenth century and is called *Kama Shastra*; the other is the well known book *Kok Shastra* also called *Ratirahasya* by Premier Koka Pandit. The latter gives a scientific and elaborate description of sex in its biological and psychological phases.

[1] *Morvi Miscellany*, Vol. III, Pp. 3-7.

All the above mentioned works of Kashmiri authors on any subject are written in Sanskrit verse, the script being *Sharda* (and not *Devanagri*), an invention of their own.

Ancient Kashmir is distinguished for its architectural and artistic attainments no less than for its contribution to philosophy, religion and literature. The valley abounds in impressive ruins of what must have at one time been grand edifices. Vandalism has helped the destructive hand of Nature in demolishing most of the architectural accomplishments of early ages but whatever remnants exist enable us to have some estimate of this side of Kashmir's past culture. Almost nothing is left for us to see from the architecture of the pre-Buddhist period. The most ancient ruins are those at Harwan and Ushkar which belong to Kushan period and are of the Buddhist type. They bear upon them the indelible marks of Indo-Greek influences of the Gandhara School. Though both these Buddhist structures evince the same plan as those in the Gandhara kingdom of the same period, ample use has been made of the local materials and suitable changes have been effected to adjust that material to the plan. In Ushkar good use has been made of the stone chip masonry obtained from local quarries. At Harwan the "diaper-pebble" style consisting of small round pebbles fixed with large and solid blocks has been freely pressed into service. "The terra-cotta tiles of Harwan in Kashmir (third century A.C.) depict knights on horseback, with bow and quiver of arrows, wearing long "frock coats" with the fluttering edges of the *Virpatta* (the hero's-band) as described by Kalhana. The tile paved courtyard of Harwan is extremely interesting on account of the portraits of ethnic types which are Central Asian as well as the style of dress and ornaments of the men and women of that age."[1]

The ruins of the temples during the Hindu period can be

[1] *River of Kings*, Page XXXII.

seen at Avantipur, Pattan, Martand, Tapar, Buniyar, Pandrethan, Loduv, Wangat, Parspore and several other places throughout the valley. The architecture of this period is surely reflective of the fusion of Vedic and Buddhist cultures. It possesses massive grandeur and has the rigidity and strength of the ancient Egyptian temples coupled with the grace of Greece. It has the simplicity of style and finish of the dressing. It gives an inkling into the mind of the Age and the simple living but high thinking of the architects who could design and the master builders who could erect such refined and beautiful structures. The celebrated temple at Martand is the finest specimen of this age. It was built by Lalitaditya in the beginning of the eighth century A.C. It is imposing in its dimensions being 63 feet long. The pillared quadrangle round the temple is 200 feet by 142 feet. The big edifice for the image of the sun-god stands surrounded by this colonnade of fluted pillars with intervening trefoil-headed recesses. The stone carving on the gateways is very fine, rich and elaborate and the pillars most of which are still standing present an attractive appearance.

The large temple at Ludov simpler and plainer in construction is similar in design to the angular-roofed viharas of Gandhara. It has no decorations, is circular internally though externally it is square in construction. It has a single arched entrance.

The two temples built by Avantivarman at his capital and known as Avantiswamin and Avanteshvara dedicated to Shiva and Vishnu impress the visitor with their sumptuousness, grandeur and magnificence. Their imposing gateways are still standing. The temples were built with huge blocks of lime stone, massive and durable. The peculiar style of architecture that was started by master-minds of Kashmir during the days of Lalitaditya or even earlier reached a stage of perfection during the rule of Avantivarman. The temples at Avantipura reveal the peace, progress and prosperity that prevailed in the country through the grace and charm of workmanship which built them.

The ruins of other big temples and edifices of this period tell the same tale of grandeur, strength, beauty and massiveness. But one need not confine oneself to them to have a picture of all that was great, grand and splendid in the architecture of ancient Kashmir. The smaller edifices are no less atractive. The temple at Pandrethan near Srinagar 18 feet square built in a tank is a thing of perennial beauty. It is made of sculptured stone and stands complete. The ceiling of this small structure shows the classic sculptured embellishments of the tenth century.

One cannot forget to mention the grand, but small by comparison, temple on the summit of Copadari Hill now called Shankaracharya by Hindus and Takhti-Sulaiman by Muslims. It sits like a head on the shoulders of a mountainman and commands a marvellous look of the whole of Srinagar and most of the Valley including the Dal lake. Which patriot has not sat for hours at the base of the temple and mused over the past, present and future of Kashmir ? The place is inspiring indeed. The temple was rebuilt by Gopaditya in the sixth century A.C.

It is not correct to call this Kashmir architecture Hindu because it differs in certain essentials from the Hindu architecture of India. Just as the Shaiva philosophy evolved by the Kashmiri thinkers is not the same as the philosophy owned by the Hindus of the rest of India, similarly the Kashmiri architecture is not strictly speaking Hindu. Though basically Indo-Aryan in origin, it has evolved under the strong influence of Greco-Buddhist and the Gandhara Schools of Architecture. Besides, the local thought and talent have also played a considerable part in shaping plans and designs of the structures. Elements of Chinese architectural design are also suspected in it. For these reasons it is a class by itself and should not be confused with the Indian architecture.

It is difficult to accurately evaluate the progress of the ancient Kashmir in the matter of sculpture. Almost all the noble images of the gods and goddesses as well as other figures of deities in the shape of giants, birds, and beasts were destroyed.

But those that have survived and were unearthed during the last three or four decades speak highly of Kashmir's ancient art of sculpture. It appears that this art also flourished first during the Buddhist period when the views of the Mahayana School encouraged the sculptors to carve images of Lord Buddha in all forms. Jataka stories were mostly the subject of the artists. Later on the images of Shiva and Vishnu also were produced. "The allegory in the *Trika* philosophy was expressed in sculpture by the body of Shiva Ardha Narishvara (the lord who is semi-faminine) in which Shiva is united with his consort Parvati, the right hand side of the body being the male sex and the left hand side being of the female sex", writes R.S. Pandit. "Parvati (literally the Maid of the Mountain) is the Shakti or Energy of Shiva personified under a faminine form and united with him. Thus we see depicted in Art the varied aspects of the destructive and generative Energy as the Union of the male and female forms".[1] The emotions represented by a few images lying in the State Museum at Srinagar are precise and unforgettable.

Because of the enchanting surroundings which constantly inspire the head and heart of a sensitive and emotional being the Valley of Kashmir is the fittest place for the growth of the fine arts like painting, music and dancing. There are references in *Nilamatapurana* and other ancient books which show that painting was a well developed art in Kashmir during the earlier centuries of the Christian era. In the *Nilamatapurana* it is expressly laid down that the "temples and the *chaityas* must be adorned with pictures". Kalhana also mentions painted halls decorated from within which existed in the Valley during his times. Sir Auriel Stein discovered in 1931 a few manuscripts in Northern Kashmir which were beautifully bound in painted covers with attractive figures on them. On the walls of the Bota Masjid which lies below the castle-hill of Srinagar the pictures of Buddhist saints are to be found which are hidden by white wash. This Masjid was formerly a Buddhist temple.

As in other parts of India dancing girls were attached to

[1] *River of Kings*, Page XXIII.

the temples from very remote times in the Valley. The art of dancing was common in the respectable families and, according to Kalhana, princes and nobles were accepted connoisseurs of the noble art. Some of the dancing girls became consorts of kings of Kashmir. King Uchhala married one who belonged to a family of dancers. In the twelfth century dancing women of the temples took prominent part in the politics of the State. This shows what a tremendous influence the art of dancing had on the social life of the people in the early ages of the country.

There is hardly any one in the valley who is not a lover of music and does not sing. Tailors in their shops, carpenters at their work, labourers carrying the load, boatmen moving the paddle and the peasant transplanting the paddy-stalks, all hum a tune. From ancient times great musicians have sprung from the Valley. It is a significant fact that a Kashmiri, Sharangdeva, who lived in the first half of the thirteenth century, was the author of *Sangit Ratnakara* which is the most authoritative work on the Indian Music both in the north and in the south. It treats of *ragas*, instruments and other technical details of Indian Music. Many commentaries have been written on it in Sanskrit, Hindi and Telgu languages. King Harsha himself was a musician and a poet of high calibre. He also loved dancing. As a matter of fact he carried these noble tasks to the extreme which proved his undoing.

CHAPTER THREE

STRUGGLE THROUGH MEDIEVAL TIMES

KASHMIR came under the Muslim rule of the Sultans in or about 1339 A.C. Much confusion has been caused by the misreading of this great event by most of the Hindu as well as Muslim historians of the Valley. In order that we may understand and appreciate the revolutionary change that took place in the fourteenth century and which deeply affected the future course of social, cultural and political life in the Valley, we should know the historical background in which it occurred.

From the time of the Avanti Varman's death in 883 A.C. until the beginning of Mahmud Ghazni's invasion in the eleventh century, page after page of the *Rajtarangini* records only the bestiality and savagery of the low-born adventurers who misgoverned the country. During the century following 902 A.C. the rulership of the kingdom changed hands as many as eighteen times. Some times the kingdom changed hands frequently between two rivals as in the case of Partha and Chakravarman. The latter was murdered in the chamber of a Domba girl and such was the degradation of the court morality that in 937 A.C. murderers were engaged by the king's own wives to crush his knees with a large stone as he lay dying in the embrace of the girl.

The history of the two succeeding centuries is a sordid record of short reigns, murders, suicides, plots, conspiracies, rebellions, oppressions and extortions. In the words of Sir Francis Younghusband it was "a state of perpetual intrigue and assassinations, of struggles with brothers, cousins, uncles, before a chief even came to the throne; of fights for power with ministers, with the military, with the nobles when he was on it, of wearying, petty internecine wars; of general discomfort, uncertainty and unrest". One king, Uchhala's successor

Radda alias Sanka, reigned only for a few hours of the night and his half brother Salhana for no more than eight months. Kings became puppets in the hands of this or that class of feudal lords or military chiefs. If one king was under the thumb of Damaras, another functioned at the behests of Tantrins or Nyayaks. King Rajadeva packed the entire administration with the men of Lavanya (modern Lone) caste. There was no law nor order in the country. The rulers were profligate drunkards and their ministers and advisers were cruel men with no intelligence, no statesmanship and no love of the homeland; clowns occupied responsible positions and became ministers; cowards and fools were appointed as commanders of the army. In the beginning of the twelfth century Kashmiris elected one Vopyadeva as their ruler in the hope that he will administer the country well. But he disgusted his admirers by his peurile acts. "He felt happy at the sight of large blocks of stones and ordered his ministers to increase the size of the smaller ones by making them drink milk of beasts." Jonaraja calls him "Rakshasa chief covered with grass".[1]

Of the monarchs of these centuries of misrule, Harsha (1089-1101 A.C.) is considered to be one whose rule was characterised by prudence and munificence towards men of learning. He was of powerful frame, great personal beauty, courageous and fond of display. But his spendthrift nature, his elaborate fashions in dress and ornaments and his multifarious extravagances soon involved him in debt. He levied all imaginable taxes but still the treasury was unable to meet his needs. He then began to rob the temples of their wealth. He did not stop with this. He laid his hands on and confiscated the images of gods in the temples made of precious metals in a villainous manner. "There was not one temple in a village, town or in the city which was not despoiled of its images by that Turushka King Harsha", says Kalhana. He adds: "He appointed Udayaraja prefect for seizing divine images. In order to defile the statues of gods he had excrements and urine poured over

[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, Page 5.

their faces by naked mendicants whose noses, feet and hands had rotted away. Divine images were dragged along by ropes round their ankles with spit instead of flowers."[1] With the unclean money that he got by these abominable and dreadful methods Harsha abandoned himself to more and more excesses of debauchery and profligacy. This reduced him to the necessity of levying more taxes. A tax was levied even on night soil by him. This drove the people to rise in revolt under the leadership of Ucchala and Sussala, the nephews of the king. The royal palace was set on fire, the queens were burnt to death, the heir-apparent was killed and the king himself was hunted down and mercilessly slain. Kalhana records that Harsha's body "naked like that of a pauper" was cremated by a compassionate wood-dealer.

A few decades later appeared a ruler Rajadeva (1213-1236 A.C.) who was greedy, conceited and cruel. According to Jonaraja, the king made it a point to insult the Bhattas, vanguard of the progressive intellectuals, plundered them and brought them to such a pass that every member of the community was heard to cry "I am not a Bhatta, I am not a Bhatta". Bhatta in Kashmiri means a learned Brahmin.

There were many floods, famines and epidemics during the century which reduced the vitality of the people to the lowest and decimated the population. Thousands died of starvation every year and many more were sold into slavery to foreigners.

It is not very difficult to imagine what must have been the plight of the people who had been subjected to such ruthless oppression continuously for hundreds of years. There was universal unrest in the Valley ; all classes of people were deeply afflicted and groaned under the weight of the misrule. The very air breathed a spirit of revolt. Only a small clique among the upper classes who ruled the country were making merry over the miseries of the masses. The structure of the Government and the fabric of the society had weakened to a dangerous

[1] *Rajtarangini*, Book VII, Verses 1091-1094.

point. They were ready to give way before the smallest stroke from any side.

When Sahadeva ascended the throne in 1300 A.C., Kashmir was ruled by "drunkards, gamblers and profligate women". As misfortune would have it, in 1319 A.C., a Tartar adventurer from the north, Zulqadar Khan, known as Dulcha, invaded the country. He had a big army under his command, which was however neither well armed nor adequately equipped. But the ferocious Tartars were able to create terror in the minds of the stricken-people and the demoralised, decrepit and weakened government. Sahadeva did not have the courage to face the invader. He fled to Kishtwar leaving the helpless people exposed to the depradations of Dulcha, which he and his hordes carried on for many months. Dulcha plundered the people, took slaves and set fire to the city of Srinagar. It was consoling to the Kashmiris that when after killing, harassing and impoverishing them for eight months, the plunderers went to leave the Valley at the advent of winter, the whole army perished in snow along with their leader.

A little before Dulcha's invasion, a Buddhist prince, Rinchen, son of Vakatnya, King of Western Tibet or Ladakh, had left his homeland after murder of his father in a rebellion and taken refuge at the court of Sahadeva. True to his culture and tradition the king granted not only asylum to Rinchen but also assigned a *jagir* to him for his maintenance. Sahadeva, though timid, inefficient and cruel, was still magnanimous and hospitable. Some years earlier in 1319 A.C., another man Shah Mir, a Muslim native of Swat valley in Dardistan, had come to Kashmir in search of employment. It appears that Kashmir kings had developed some fascination for the Muslims. King Harsha had some Muslim captains in his army. So when Shah Mir approached Sahadeva with the prayer for being allowed to live in the Valley it was readily accepted and a village was given to him as a *jagir*.

A third figure whose descendants were destined to play an important role in the history of Kashmir, also arrived in Srinagar at this time. He was Lankar Chak, a Buddhist prince

from Dardistan. Defeated by his brother, Lankar fled from his homeland and found a welcome asylum in Kashmir.

Shah Mir was a shrewd politician and a far-sighted statesman. He was keen observer of events and having lived in the city and moved among ruling circles and upper classes for half a dozen years, he knew the ins and outs of the administration of the time. He was also well acquainted with important people. He saw the possibilities and the opportunities that lay before him in the chaotic conditions prevailing at the time. He was advanced in years, widely experienced and sober in habits. Rinchen being of royal birth also appears to have possessed some intelligence about him. But both were fully conscious that, despite disturbed times, they could not aspire to rise to power without substantial support of public opinion. Undoubtedly, both were conspiring and intriguing, which was the only kind of politics known during those days. Undoubtedly also, they had realized the possibilities and the opportunities that a scheming brain could seize in the disturbed conditions of the country. But neither Rinchen nor Shah Mir had any armies of their own. Unless, therefore, they could enjoy some popularity both among the civilian officials and the army chiefs, they could not have been successful in their intrigues.

There can be no doubt that Sahadeva must have become unpopular with all classes of the people owing to his cowardice and desertion. Popular or unpopular, he did not become the king again for, after his flight to Kishtwar, he disappears from history and we do not hear any more about him.

By the time Dulcha and his army were buried in their snowy graves, Shah Mir and Rinchen appear to have begun to become favourites with some feudal lords, court officials and army chiefs. Perhaps they had rendered some public service and maintained the morale of the people during the dark days of the Tartar depredations. It seems people were prepared to acknowledge the sovereignty of Rinchen, though a new comer compared with Shah Mir, perhaps because he was a scion of a royal dynasty or because he worshipped at the shrine of Buddha whose religion was most popular for centuries in the Valley. The

patient and shrewd Shah Mir also supported him. There was opposition from Ram Chandra, the Commander-in-Chief and Prime Minister of Sahadeva, but he could not secure the help of politicians and had therefore to run away and take shelter in the fort at Gagangir in the Lar Pargana. Before long Rinchen defeated Ram Chandra through a stratagem and killed him in a battle outside the fort. Kashmir needed a strong, capable ruler and she found one in the person of the fugitive Buddhist. Jonaraja calls him "a lion among men".

As a gesture of goodwill towards the opponents and the survivors of the vanquished foe, Rinchen wisely married Kota, the daughter of Ram Chandra, and appointed his son Rawal Chandra as Commander of the army with Western Tibet and Lar as his *jagir*.

After his accession to the throne Rinchen wanted to become a Shaivite (Hindu) but was refused admittance into the fold by orthodox Brahmins. In his desperate hunt for a new faith, he met a Muslim saint called Bulbul Shah who had recently arrived from Turkistan. The persuasive teachings of the saint profoundly influenced Rinchen and so he embraced Islam.

On his conversion Rinchen assumed the name of Sultan Sadar-ud-Din. He built a mosque and a *khanqah* for his preceptor at the place which is now known by the name of Bulbul Lankar in Srinagar. Rinchen was very clever and alert. Even today Kashmiris remember him and if anyone is over clever and too active he is called "Rentun". But Rinchen was also just, merciful and as equitous as one could be during those hard times but he did not live long. He died in 1322 A.C. leaving behind him his widow and a son Haider.

Now a significant event occurred in the history of Kashmir. Kota Rani did not allow Haider to be proclaimed the successor to Sadar-ud-Din. Instead she invited one Udyanadeva, brother of Sahadeva, who had fled to Gandhara at the time of Dulcha's invasion. She married him and made him the king. Shah Mir, patient and sober as ever, did not object, supported Kota Rani's move and acknowledged the sovereignty of Udyanadeva. Pro-

bably he realised that Kota Rani had played her hand masterfully and catered for the sentiment of the people ; probably he knew that his own adherents and supporters were not yet numerous and that Kota Rani was beloved of the lords and nobles. Thus Islam suffered a reverse and the Hindus regained the sovereignty over Kashmir.

Unfortunately however Udyanadeva did not give a good account of himself. He did not prove worthy of the trust that Kota Rani reposed in him. He remained on the throne for fifteen years but lacked wisdom, courage and ability. He was cowardly and proved by his conduct that Kashmiri Hindus had exhausted all potentialities to rule and administer a good government. Had Kota Rani not kept the authority in her own hands and managed the government of the country while Udyanadeva acted as a nominal monarch, Hindu rule would have finally ended earlier than it actually did. Had Kota Rani lived and ruled at a little better time and had the social, political and economic conditions not become so appalling and chaotic by the misrule of so many wicked monarchs one after another, she would have surely shone like a luminous patriot. But misfortune dogged her footsteps.

Soon after Udyanadeva's installation as the king the Valley was invaded by yet another desperado, Urwan, also called Urdil by some historians and Achala by Jonaraja. Udyanadeva, as before, ran away in dread to Ladakh as he thought that Dulcha had turned up again. But Kota Rani stood firm and faced the invader heroically. She made a stirring appeal to her subjects and advised them to stand solidly behind her against the aggressive foreign hordes. Accordingly Kashmir for once during those dark times fiercely resisted and defeated the enemy who had to sue for peace. Shah Mir took a leading part in this patriotic war which endeared him to Kashmiris.

Notwithstanding his base desertion, Kota Rani invited Udyanadeva again and re-installed him on the throne. Only if Kota Rani's choice had been a better one she might have been able to preserve the Kashmir throne for Hindu kings. What she did failed to secure the approval of the people ; it also crea-

ted jealousy and deep indignation in the mind of scheming Shah Mir.

Udyanadeva died in 1338-39 A.C. Kota Rani had one son named Bola Rattan from him. When the throne became vacant the dowager queen over-ruled the claims of both Haider and Bola Rattan and herself ascended the throne. She was however afraid of Shah Mir because by this time he had made many friends among the feudal lords and army chiefs through his wisdom, patience, bravery and large heartedness. He was seventy-six years old and had lived in the Valley for more than twenty-six years. Kota Rani finding that it was not safe to live in Srinagar with supporters of Shah Mir all around, repaired to the fort of Andarkot near Sumbal which was once the capital of the State and still a flourishing town. Moreover, she appointed Bhikshana, an efficient, experienced and trusted noble, as her Chief Minister which proved an added cause for displeasure to Shah Mir as he thought his claims were ignored. The time had ripened now and the road for revolt was open. Shah Mir had only to raise his banner and people came under it in large numbers. He swooped upon Andarkot and murdered Bhikshana by a base trick. This decided the fate of the contending parties. With the loss of her trusted Prime Minister, Kota became helpless and had to surrender. It is said that she accepted the proposal of Shah Mir to marry him but eventually over-powered by grief and disappointment, the sensitive, self respecting and patriotic queen committed suicide. Thus was laid the foundation of the Muslim Rule in Kashmir in 1339 A.C.

I have narrated these historic events in detail to show that Muslims did not enter the Valley as conquerors or plunderers. There were no doubt a few thousand Muslims, mostly new converts in the valley, but the Muslim rule was established mainly with the support of the local Hindus. Shah Mir worked his way to the top slowly, steadily and patiently ascending rung after rung of the ladder just as any ambitious Kashmiri Hindu politician would have done. There is no gainsaying the fact that he was an intriguer in the sense in which all politicians of that time without exception were intriguers and

designers. But it goes to his credit that he was neither a debauchee nor a profligate. His simplicity of character no less than his political acumen and intelligence made him popular which ultimately brought him to the throne. Shah Mir "assuaged the troubles of Kashmir and changed its conditions", writes Jonaraja[1] and in the words of Wolseley Haig, he used "wisely and beneficially the power he had acquired. The Hindu kings had been atrocious tyrants whose avowed policy had been to leave their subjects nothing beyond a bare subsistence. He ruled on more liberal principles".[2]

The establishment of Shah Mir on the throne of Kashmir was not the triumph of an Islamic power struggling for supremacy in the State; it was not even the success of Shah Mir as an adventurer, intriguer or a politician though his qualities of head and mature experience did play a conspicuous part in the historic change. It was in reality triumph of the Freedom Struggle of the people who had been groaning under the misrule of the Hindu kings. Hindu polity had come to a dead end. It had exhausted all the possibilities of growth. It had stagnated, decayed and died. Again and again history afforded opportunity to the Hindu aspirants to kingship to start afresh, but, on every such occasion, they failed to grasp it and give a good account of themselves by improving the material, moral and intellectual condition of the people over whom they ruled. Even after a Muslim monarch, Sadar-ud-Din, had ruled the country for three years, a chance presented itself when Kota Rani invited Udyanadeva from Gandhara, but it proved to be the last. The ruling clique merrily went on enjoying a depraved and demoralised life of luxury while the people were passing through a period of misery, squalor, famine and want unknown in their history. To pacify his conscience, the timid, inefficient and worthless King Udayanadeva was devoting his leisure to worship in the temple while thousands were dying

[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, Page 32.

[2] *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. II, Page 277.

by hunger and pestilence. To such low depths the rulers had sunk during the chaotic conditions of the times.

The rule of the Muslims came as a blessing not only politically but intellectually and spiritually. It popularised Islam in Kashmir, which revolutionised the thinking of the people and their whole attitude to life. Politics had dehumanised the Kashmiris; Islam made them men again.

Just as the Muslim rule was established in Kashmir without much bloodshed so was Islam spread throughout the length and breadth of the Valley by peaceful preachings and lucid persuasions of Mir Sayyid Ali and hundreds of the Sayyid missionaries who came from Hamadan and other parts of Persia. "Islam made its way into Kashmir not by forcible conquest", says Sir M.A. Stein in his introduction to English translation of *Rajtarangini*, but by gradual conversion for which the influx of foreign adventurers, both from the south and from Central Asia, had prepared the ground".[1] The reason why Islam spread in the Valley rapidly and peacefully can be easily explained when it is known that the *Trika* philosophy which the Kashmiri Hindus have evolved, is basically similar to the Islamic philosophy in many respects. The *Trika* and Islam both teach that:

(a) God is self-evident and does not stand in need of any proof.

(b) There is only one God, call him Allah or Ishvara as you like; there is none equal to him and no one to assist him.

(c) A man with no attachment to the world while living in the world is really out of it and even in this body he can see what ordinary man cannot see and perform extraordinary acts which others cannot do.

(d) Every thing is God in the sense that it exists in him. The soul is immortal and immaterial, taking delight in knowledge alone.

(e) There is nothing real but God. He is everywhere and everything. He is the source of all existence.

[1] *Rajtarangini*, Vol. I, Page 130.

(f) Four necessities within the natural limit are not considered worldly, viz., food, garment, house, wife and children.
(g) One must live in society but resist passion.
(h) Appreciation of beauty. If one does not possess the capacity to appreciate the abstract beauty, he should train his mind to appreciate physical beauty.
(i) Both sexes have equal rights to spirituality.
(j) There is no distinction based on caste, colour or race among mankind.

With such similarities in the teachings of the old and the new faith, Hindus of Kashmir who were devoted followers of Shaivism did not find Islam obnoxious in any way. Rather they were happy to find a creed whose basic tenets were almost the same as their own with the additional merit that the new faith ushered in a strong government, the sore need of the times. Conversions therefore took place by thousands and before long the majority of people became Muslims by faith.

Had Kashmir not adopted Islam and the Muslim rule in the fourteenth century it is difficult to say what would have happened to it. It might have perished. Surely the powers that were gener ated among the people in various branches of creative life, such as learning, art and architecture, would not have come to play. By coming into contact with a new culture and civilisation as a result of Muslim rule, Kashmiris extricated themselves from the morass in which they had fallen and in which they were sinking deeper and deeper. Now they started their life afresh. Thinking was stirred, learning revived and fine arts were cultivated anew ; music, painting, dancing got a fresh start ; industry was introduced and zest for life strengthened. As I shall presently show, no sooner was anarchy ended and the Muslim rule well established master-minds began to reappear. The contribution of Kashmiris, both Hindu and Muslim, to Persian literature and thought is not negligible. Indeed it ranks very high in the literatures of the medieval times. It was Islam that revitalised the dead spirit of Kashmir. Without this fresh impetus even the production of original

writings by Hindu authors on philosophy, literature, religion, astronomy and other subjects in Sanskrit during the five centuries of the Muslim rule would not have been possible. Hindu intellect and mind would have stagnated and perished.

Shah Mir who assumed the title of Sultan Shams-ud-Din on ascending the throne did not live long to rule and died in his eightieth year in 1342 A. C. In his time two families rose to political power, They were first the descendants of Lankar Chak known as Chakresha (Chaks) and second a local clan called Margesha (Magre). Shah Mir was succeeded by his two sons Jamshed and Ala-ud-Din, the latter deposing the former after a reign of only one year or so. Lalla, the celebrated hermitess, lived during the reign of Ala-ud-Din.

The first really great king of the Muslim period was Shahab-ud-Din who came to the throne in the year 1354 A.C. By this time the government had been firmly established, law and order had been restored, the wounds inflicted by Dulcha and Urdil had been healed and the recurrence of famines stopped by wise measures. People had again begun to live happy, peaceful and contented lives. The king therefore devoted his attention to foreign conquests. He thoroughly organised military forces, trained them for warfare and appointing two Kashmiri Hindus, Chandra Damara and Laula Damara, as his commanders started on a campaign. He conquered Baltistan, Ladakh, Kishtwar and Jammu one after another. Encouraged by these victories Shahab-ud-Din collected a big army of 50,000 infantry and 50,000 cavalrymen, recruits from the hilly areas of Poonch, Rajouri, and Uri. He then swooped down on Sind inflicting a crushing defeat on the ruler. Thereafter he proceeded towards north attacking and defeating the kings of Udabhanda (Ohind) and Purushpura (Peshawar). Thereafter he subdued Kashgar, Badakshan and Kabul.

Like Lalitaditya, Shahab-ud-Din had the irrepressible desire to conquer and like him all his expeditions were successful. "Deer-eyed women attracted not his mind, nor the pleasures of drinking, nor the light of the moon. Only the march with his army occupied the king's attention", writes Jonaraja."Neither

heat nor cold, nor evening nor night, neither hunger nor thirst obstructed his march. When this proud king was on the march, he found no difficulty in crossing unfordable rivers, inaccessible mountains and barren deserts".[1] Such was his inner urge to conquer the foreign lands. It was the second time in history that the Kashmiris proved their military prowess. "Shahab-ud-Din in Kashmir history figures next to Lalitaditya Mukhtapida", writes Sufi.[2] The fame of the successful exploits of Shahab-ud-Din reached far and near and the kings began to shake on their thrones. It was the time of the Tughluks in India; the dynasty was declining. Udakpati, Raja of Nagarkot (Kangara), had made an incursion into the territories of Firuz Tughluk and was returning with spoils and loot when he heard that the King of Kashmir was encamping on the banks of Sutluj. With humility Udakpati laid his gains at the feet of Shahab-ud-Din and acknowledged his overlordship.

If Shahab-ud-Din was great in conquering foreign countries by his military might he was greater in preserving, protecting and advancing the culture of Kashmir. He was a lover of learning and patronised art and architecture. He was married to a Hindu lady named Laxmi and in her honour founded a town Lachhmi Nagar at the foot of the Hari Parbat hill. He also founded two more towns Shahabdinpura (modern Shadipur) and Shahpur (now a mohalla Shyampur in Srinagar). Many of the king's ministers, advisers and army commanders were Hindus on whom he reposed complete trust.

It was in the year 1375 A.C. that Syed Mir Ali Hamadani, popularly known in Kashmir as Shah Hamadan, dreading persecution at the hands of Timur, came to Kashmir where Shahab-ud-Din's brother in the king's absence welcomed him according to the time-honoured traditions of the land. After staying for four months he returned but came back in 1379 A.C. accompanied by hundreds of Sayyid missionaries to preach Islam.

Shahab-ud-Din had the highest regard for the religious

[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. IIII, Page 38.
[2] *Kashir* Vol. I, Page 136.

sentiments of his subjects. Once, when in sore need of money, the King's minister Udayasri suggested that the brass image of the Brihadbuddha lying in a famous temple might be melted to mint coins, Shahab-ud-Din felt so indignant at this that the minister did not have the courage to approach him again. It is not surprising that he was loved equally by Hindus and Muslims for his just rule and humane administration. Shahab-ud-Din ruled for 19 years and died in 1373 A.C.

But the progress and prosperity of people did not remain uninterrupted. At the death of Shahab-ud-Din's successor, Qutub-ud-Din, in 1389 A.C. there came to the throne of Kashmir a ferocious bigot, a cruel fanatic and a religious zealot who brought the noble traditions of the Kashmir culture and the fair name of Islam into disgrace. His name was Sikandar and he was only eight years old at the time of his accession to the throne. So long as he was a minor, his mother, the dowager queen Haura or Sura Begum, and the senior ministers of the State Council administered the country and nothing very serious happened. But when Sikandar acquired maturity, his fanatical zeal for the spread of Islam seized him and he became tyrannical towards his Hindu subjects. He levied new taxes including the *Jazia* poll-tax upon them. Not satisfied with this, he began to persecute them in other ways. On mere pretexts Hindus began to be imprisoned and tortured. No religious ceremonies could be performed by them in their houses or temples. After some time in power, Sikandar ran amuck ; he looted temples, broke images and demolished the structures. "There was no city, no town, no village, no wood", writes Jonaraja,"where the temples of gods were unbroken". Sikandar broke the images of Martanda, Vishaya, Ishana, Chakrabhrit, Tripreshwara and Shesha. "When Sureshvan, Varaha and others were broken", continues the historian, "the world trembled but not so the mind of the wicked king. He forgot his kingly duties and took delight day and night in breaking images".[1] With the material of the dismantled temples, Sikandar built mosques, *khanaqahs* and *madarassas*. At the site of a grand temple of Shiva he construc-

[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, Pp. 59-60.

heat nor cold [illegible] of money,
obstructed [illegible] image of
he found [illegible] melted to
ble moun[illegible] that the
to conqu[illegible] in. It
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Din in [illegible] b-ud-
pida", [illegible] ain
Shah [illegible] or,
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[illegible]veral additions and altera-
[illegible]t the magnificent Khanqah-
[illegible]mple in 1395 A.C. He did all
[illegible]slam. Unmindful of the tradi-
the land over which destiny had
[illegible]ndar had a passion for enforcing
affairs.

[illegible]d of Sikandar's religious zeal, fanatics
[illegible]ds poured into the Valley during his time,
[illegible]gthened him in his determination to execute
[illegible]y that was undermining the very foundations
"As the wind destroys the trees, and the locusts
[illegible]op, so did the Yavanas (religious fanatics) destroy
[illegible]s of Kashmir", says Jonaraja. "Attracted by the gifts
[illegible]ours which the king bestowed on them and by his kind-
[illegible]ne Mlechhas entered Kashmir even as locusts enter a good
[illegible]d of corn."[1] "The Sultan was now fired with the zeal to
change the character of his rule into an Islamic administration
and a considerable advance was made in this direction", writes
Sufi his great admirer. "As his orders to this end were car-
ried out either by recent converts to Islam or other officials, it
may be presumed that these converts and officials were not
actuated only by zeal for the faith ; many offences must have
been committed which may have wounded the susceptibilities
of the Hindus."[2]

Incredibly enough Sikandar was married to a Hindu lady, Sri Shoba Mahadevi; his Prime Minister was a Hindu Rai Magre as was also his Commander-in-Chief Achaladeva. Achala embraced Islam and came to be known as Abdal Raina. But Rai Magre raised the banner of revolt, seized Ladakh and declared his independence. He fought valiantly but was vanquished in a big battle, arrested and put in prison where he died. There were other commotions in the kingdom which the king suppressed mercilessly. Sikandar got books of learning in Sanskrit burnt "even as fire burns grass". Therefore scholars

[1] *The Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, Page 58.
[2] *Kashir*, Vol I, Page 147.

precipitately fled to distant lands taking their books with them. When the bigot's unquenchable thirst for persecution of non-Muslims did not abate, thousands of Hindus decided to bid good bye to the land of their birth. They were allowed to leave their homes but military men were posted at the borders who stopped their exodus. The miserable Hindus therefore went into hiding in the houses of their Muslim compatriots who also helped many to cross the borders stealthily. Thousands of independent intellectuals committed suicide but did not bow before the tyrant's fanaticism. "Struck by fear some Brahmins killed themselves by means of poison, some by the rope, others by drowning themselves in water, others again by falling from a precipice and others burnt themselves."[1]

Sikandar's policy of persecution was disliked by the Kashmir Muslims. Against his explicit wish and at the risk of incurring his displeasure, Muslims gave shelter to innumerable Hindus who had come under suspicion.

Sikandar is the blackest spot on the bright history of Kashmir. He was the anti-thesis of the great and noble culture which Kashmiris had evolved through thousands of years of their ancient history. He is known as "But Shikan" (the inconoclast) and all fair-minded historians, Muslim as well as Hindu, have with one voice condemned his misdeeds. Jonaraja has made Suhabhatta alias Malik Saif Din, a Brahmin convert to Islam, who was one of the chief advisers of the king, also responsible for the policy of persecution. "But it must be distinctly remembered that this sort of religious zeal is deplored by Islam", writes Sufi. "It positively prohibits it. It is on record that Mir Mohammed Hamadani warned Suhabhatta against such action and pointed out to him the well known verse of the Quran (II, 256) which runs 'Let there be no compulsion in Religion."[2] In Kashmir even to this day anyone with evil nature is called "Buthishigun" (But Shikan).

[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, Page 66.
[2] *Kashir*, Vol. I, Page 106.

As if Sikandar's deeds are not heinous enough, many Hindu historians have exaggerated his atrocities beyond limit and given the fullest liberty to their imaginations in doing so. What is worse, on the basis of Sikandar's atrocities the entire class of Muslim Kings is denounced and Islam itself is put up as an intolerant creed. Such criticism is not only entirely groundless but it is positively dangerous and mischievous as it creates bitterness between the Muslims and Hindus residing in the State and prevents them to live amicably together.

It was the good fortune of the people of Kashmir that the fanatic king died young at the age of thirty-two in the year 1413 A. C. before the foundations of Kashmir culture had been seriously impaired. And, happily, whatever harm he had been able to do, was undone by one of his immediate successors, the illustrious, the noble and the reputed Bud Shah.

It is puzzling that occasionally in History the sons and successors of tyrants are noble kings or the reverse takes place when kind-hearted and liberal monarchs give birth to despots and cruel rulers. Sikandar was first succeeded by his elder son Ali Shah who ruled only for seven years till 1420 A.C. when the throne passed to the younger brother Shahi Khan who is known to history as Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin or Bud Shah as he is affectionately called by the people of Kashmir.

Bud Shah had already served his country as the Prime Minister of his elder brother before he ascended the throne and had given a glimpse of his future greatness. On assuming the rulership of the country, the first thing he did was to restore confidence among all classes of people in himself by his acts of generosity and statesmanship. He abrogated all iniquitous laws that Sikandar had put on the statute book to persecute Hindus. The poll-tax and other impositions levied on the non-Muslims were remitted. "When my father died," says Srivara, "I informed the king of the cremation tax and the king punished the *kiralas* and abolished the rate on the cremation of the dead. From that time the common people on their death are cremated on the spot, to the grief of the Mlechhas who are averse to witness

cremation. The *bhurjja* makers (who burn the dead) danced with their umbrellas, and played on musical instruments on this exemption from tax".[1] Bud Shah declared that Hindus were to be governed by their own personal laws and not by the *Shariat*. Indeed he got an assurance from the demoralised Hindus that they would not act in contravention of what was written in their own *Shastras*. He released all Hindus who had been imprisoned and recalled those Brahmins and other intellectuals who had migrated from Kashmir. Those who had gone into hiding also came out to live openly like other free citizens of the State. Complete religious independence was granted to followers of all creeds in the country.

Bud Shah was not satisfied with the negative policy of non-persecution. He went further. He rebuilt the temples that had been demolished by Sikandar and were lying in ruins. Within the palace known as Sidhapuri, Bud Shah repaired dilapidated temples by props or rebuilt them, says Srivara. "And above the palaces he built the two temples of Martanda and Amarnatha which illumined the distant sky".[2] He opened *pathshalas* and *vidyalayas* for students to study religious scriptures in Sanskrit. Scholarships were awarded to Hindu students to enable them to go to Banaras and the Deccan for higher studies. *Jagirs* were assigned to Hindu institutions. And to respect the religious susceptibilities of his Hindu subjects, Bud Shah forbade the killing of cows.

Bud Shah was himself a student of Sanskrit. He studied the Hindu Philosophy and loved to recite stanzas from *Yog Vasishta* throughout his life. As a matter of fact, when his sons rebelled against him in his old age and he felt restless and dejected, this scripture was a source of solace to him. Often he asked the historian Srivara, who was one of his courtiers, to read portions of it to him at a quiet place in his palace. Srivara says that the king caused the *Puranas*, books of Logic, the *Mimansa* and other books to be brought from distant lands and distributed them to the learned. "The King heard me recite the *Vasishta* and *Brahma Darshana* composed by Valmiki."[3]

[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, page 143.
[2] Ibid, Vol. III, Page 143.
[3] Ibid, Vol. III, Pp 145-46.

Prompted by the example of the king, Muslims too studied Hindu scriptures, says Srivara. "The Mlechhas (Muslims) read the *Vrihat Katha Sara*, the *Hatkeshwara Samhita*, the *Puranas* and other books in their own language". " He was the destroyer of evils, and he preserved by various means the good usages of Kashmira even as a physician helps our digestive functions by medicines,"[1] concludes Srivara. "During Bud Shah's reign Hindu traditions re-asserted themselves while the country enjoyed a return to its old prosperity", states Sufi.

A narrow-minded man is apt to think that because of this liberal attitude towards Hindus and Hinduism, Bud Shah was less interested in Islam. That is not true. Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin was a devout Muslim and did his best to spread the teachings of the Faith. He invited great scholars of Muslim Philosophy, Theology and Jurisprudence and appointed them to high posts. Maulana Kabir, a Kashmiri, who had in his youth migrated to Herat was induced to return and hold the office of Sheikh-ul-Islam or Head of the Ecclesiastical Department. He was also the Vice-Chancellor of the Dar-ul-Ulum, the University. He invited Sayyid Hussain Qummi Rizvi, a learned theologian, who had dedicated himself to the preaching of Islam and the Bagh-i-Zainagir was made his headquarters. He appointed Qazi Jamal-ud-Din, a scholar of great repute, who had come from Hindustan and lived an austere life at Khanqah of Shah Hamadan, as the Chief Justice for the whole kingdom.

Other notable Muslim courtiers were Mulla Ahmad Kashmiri who translated, besides *Rajtarangini*, *Mahabharta* into Persian; Hafiz Baghdadi and Mulla Parsa and Mulla Nadiri, the Poet Laureate.

Among the notable Hindu courtiers of Bud Shah were, besides (1) Jonaraja and (2) Srivara, the two historians who have already been often mentioned in this book, (3) Uttasom, Head of the Translation Bureau, (4) Yodhabhatta of marvellous memory who was deputed by the king to Maharashtra to study *Atharva Veda*, (5) Tilakacharya, the Buddhist (6) Simha,

[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, Page 78.

the Astrologer, (7) Karpurbhatta, the Physician (8) Rupyabhatta, the Astronomer, (9) Ramananda, the Chemist, and (10) Shivbhatta, the Physician.

In glaring contrast to Suhabhatta or Malik Saif Din, the Chief Minister of Sikandar, there lived in the time of Zain-ul-Abidin a great Pandit whose name deserves to live for ever. He was Shri Bhatta and is now known as Shari Bhatta. The king was suffering from a boil which baffled all physicians but was healed by some ointment supplied by Shari Bhatta. Thus gratified the King commanded the physician to ask for any royal favour which would be granted for the mere asking. But the great Pandit would have nothing for himself and the various boons asked for and granted were meant to help the persecuted community of Brahmins to live peaceful and honourable lives. This incident occurred in the very beginning of Zain-ul-Abidin's reign. Bud Shah highly appreciated this spirit of sacrifice in the Brahmin physician and ultimately appointed him as an officer for the encouragement and study of Medicine. The locality where he practised is still known as *Sharibhattun wan* at Haval in Srinagar.

Bud Shah was a great lover of poetry, music and painting. He derived pleasure and delight by the company of intellectuals and artists who were always present in large numbers in his court.

Simultaneously with his laudable efforts to restore confidence among all classes of people, Bud Shah devoted his energies to establish law and order in his kingdom. He formulated a code of secular laws, engraved it on copper plates and had it placed prominently in markets and halls of justice. Never in his life did the king tolerate any defiance of law and criminals, however influential and highly placed, were duly punished. He did not spare his foster-brother whom he got executed for murder Yet Bud Shah abhorred bloodshed and did not approve of heavy punishment for petty crimes. "Knowing that low caste men take themselves to thieving when in want of means of livelihood, the king gave them provisions."[1] He introduced prison

[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, Page 101.

reforms, stopped branding of prisoners and started industries like pottery and mat-making in prison for the benefit of the inmates.

Having restored law and order and having gained the goodwill of all his subjects, Bud Shah like Avantivarman devoted his whole attention to economic betterment and the welfare of the country. First he revived the indigenous industries, shawl weaving, pottery, carpentry and fine works. Afterwards he invited mechanics, industrialists, architects and craftsmen from Hindustan and Iran. Through them he introduced paper making, silk weaving, wood carving and silver smithy. Almost all the industries that are flourishing in the present-day Kashmir have had their beginnings in the reign of Zain-ul-Abidin. He discovered copper mines and worked them. It was in his time that gold dust was found in the river at Ladakh.

Like Avantivarman again the intelligent Zain-ul-Abidin saw that the prosperity of the people depended on good agriculture. He had no Suyya to assist him but he designed several irrigation projects, constructed canals and aqueducts thereby making large tracts of land arable. His Zainagir canal and Shah Kuhl are to this day irrigating thousands of acres of land in north and south of the Valley. Land assessment was revised and farmers and peasants were protected from illegal exactions of officials.

Zain-ul-Abidin constructed roads and bridges over many canals to encourage traffic and facilitate carrying of merchandise from one part of land to another. The king devoted his attention to medical science as well and opened hospitals for men as well as women.

Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin had a passion for architecture. He built towns, palaces, mosques, islands, canals, bridges, gardens, temples and monasteries. Ruins of many of these may still be seen throughout the length and breadth of the valley. These are almost all in his name. Some of them are called Zaina Kot, Zainagir, Zaina Kadal, Zaina Lank, Zaina Math, Zaina Pattan, Zaina Gam, Zaina Kundal and Zainapur. He built innumer-

able *carvansarais* and rest houses by the road-side for the convenience of travellers.

Having made his country secure and prosperous, Bud Shah planned to go on military expeditions towards the close of his reign between 1460-70 A.C. He conquered the Punjab, Kulu and Ladakh. Bud Shah died in his seventieth year in 1470 A.C. when he had ruled for nearly fifty-one years. "No one cooked his food that day, no smoke arose from the houses, all were dumb with grief and breathless. Such was the state of capital which seemed to be without life".[1]

If tolerance for other people's views, encouragement to independent thinking, patronage of learning, respect for all religions, refuge to the persecuted and equal justice for all, are the distinguishing features of the cultural heritage of Kashmir, it is unquestionable that Zain-ul-Abidin Bud Shah was the most representative king during the medieval times to represent that culture in himself. In his long reign the Valley witnessed unprecedented progress and enjoyed a prosperity that had not been known for many centuries. Though historians have classified him as a Muslim monarch, it is difficult to prove that he belonged to any particular faith or religious creed. It is well known that "he was not only a patron of Sanskrit learning, he used to go on pilgrimage to the ancient *Tirthas* of the Valley".[2] As a matter of fact while Muslims have owned Zain-ul-Abidin as a co-religionist, Hindus have always believed that he was Bhat Shah (the Brahmin King), a *Tapasvi* of a very high order who had taken birth as a Sultan of Kashmir merely to restore the Hindu Dharma to its deserved place. A modern-minded pat-riot might contend that the very name, Bud Shah, and his works are ample proof that he was neither a Hindu nor a Muslim but essentially a Kashmiri who built a progressive and a secular State on the foundations of the composite Kashmir culture which had been evolved through thousands of years till his own day.

Let that be as it may. These past five centuries have

[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III Page 173.

[2] *Rajtaragini* edited by A. Stein Vol. I, page 131.

not diminished the affection that the Kashmiris have cherished in their hearts for the great monarch. Verily with the passage of time and the freedom and independence of our homeland eluding our grasp, Bud Shah is becoming more and more a national symbol of tolerance, patriotism, liberty, progress, learning and all that Kashmir culture stands for.

Bud Shah had set up a very high standard of administration which his graceless and petty-minded son Haji Khan could not maintain. Haji Khan alias Haider Shah was a vain and cruel man. One day he invited the ministers of his father whom he had dismissed because they stood loyally by the side of their master when the son rose in rebellion to capture the throne. Seated in a room of the palace the royal servants beheaded them all under orders of the king.[1]

Haji Khan took a fancy for one barber named Purna also called Riktetara. The low-cultured barber soon rose to power and indulged in atrocities and brutalities against those whom he did not like. Killing by ordinary methods could not satiate his hunger for torture of innocent men. His victims were high and low, poor and wealthy. "The relentless and the sinful barber", writes Srivara, "cut off the Thakuras and the courtiers of the King's father by the saw". On another occasion he got a few persons impaled on the road-side. For three days and nights the unfortunate men lived like this shrieking till death ended there agony.[2]

Purna instigated Brahmins to rise against the Muslim rule and when they did so he advised the king to suppress them. A period of cruel persecution followed. "During this time of the pillage of the property of the Brahmins they gave up their caste and their dress and exclaimed 'I am not a Bhatta, I am not a Bhatta'." "There were in the city many rich and principal gods and the king ordered the plunder of their images at the instigation of the Mlechhas".[3] But Haider Shah ruled only for two years and soon after the death of his patron, Purna found him-

[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, Page 192.
[2] Ibid, Vol. III, Page 187.
[3] Ibid, Vol. III. Page 196.

self in prison and there in a dingy cell he died by inches brooding over his evil past.

Haider Shah's successor Hassan Shah revived the liberal policy of his grandfather, Bud Shah. He patronised learning and himself closely studied the six schools of Hindu Philosophy. He loved music passionately and had twelve hundred musicians at his court. But he was careless and ease-loving. His queen came from a family of Sayyids who were foreigners. During the latter part of his rule the king patronised the Sayyids. As they were not only religious bigots but also "regarded people of Kashmir scarcely even as grass" they became unpopular and were hated in the Valley. Patroits like Jayalala Thakkura, Saif Damara, Jahangir Magre and Jonarajanaka joined hands to oust them. It was the last named who ultimately killed the whole family despite the royal support, to the relief of the people of Kashmir. But the decline and decay of the Shah Miris had set in. Intrigues and plots became the order of the day and justice a thing of the past. In Hassan Shah's time, according to Srivara, "accepting bribes was considered by the officers of the State as a virtue, oppressing the subjects was regarded as wisdom and addiction to women was regarded happiness".[1]

The struggle for throne between two kings, Mohammed Shah and Fath Shah, during the period of 32 years from 1484 to 1516 A. C. remind one of the ignominious tussle between Partha and Chakravarman for 31 years from 906 to 937 A.C. By turns both of them came to the throne, the former three times and the latter as many as five times. They did not wield the real power and were pawns in the hands of their nobles. Damaras and Nyayaks had ceased to be a force in politics. Two new families Margesha and Chakresha, already mentioned, reached the top and had become the king-makers in Kashmir. Some of the nobles who wielded influence and took leading part in politics were Tazi Butt, Jayalala Thakura, Jonarajanka, Saif Dar, Shams Chak, Musa Raina, Ibrahim Magre, Jahangir Padar and Abdal Magre.

But the most prominent of all nobles who decided the

[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, Page 252.

fate of the kings and the politics of the country for nearly two decades was Kaji Chak known also as Kanchan Chakresha or Kacha Chakra. He was the descendent of Lankar Chak who as we know came as a refugee from Dardistan in the time of Sahadeva and was granted asylum by the King of Kashmir.

None of these nobles was scrupulous, honest, sincere or straight-forward in his politics. They were all self-seekers, time-servers, opportunists, intriguers and mean. They would become patriots, defenders of the faith, representatives of the people or the upholders of freedom if by doing so they could attain the object of their ambition. Capture of power was the only goal of their lives. Magres conspired to overthrow the Chaks and the latter in turn did the same to defeat the former. But having attained this object, Chaks would fight among themselves and so did Magres. On Fath Shah's accession in 1986 A.C. the foreigners bribed the ministers of the State and the ministers allowed them three days to plunder the city.[1]

In or about 1487 A.C. Shams-ud-Din Iraqi, a Muslim preacher of Shia faith, came from Talish to Kashmir during the first period of Fath Shah's rule. He had been exiled by the Governor of Khurasan and sought asylum in the Valley. He was a reputed scholar and by his persuasive teachings, no less than by his noble and examplary character, converted Hussain Chak, a powerful noble, to Shia faith. Soon many thousands of Kashmiris, both Hindus as well as Muslims, accepted the new creed. This introduced one more element in the social life of the people which unhappily contributed a further cause for prevailing disturbances in politics. Just as the first converts to Islam in the beginning of Shah Mir's rule were enthusiastic, vigorous and zealous about their religion, the first followers of the Shia creed too exhibited a similar energy for the spread of their faith. They went one better. Since the Chaks espoused the cause of Shiaism their rivals, the Magres, became its opponents. Fath Shah had come to power with the help of Chaks. He therefore granted all confiscated lands to Mir Shams-ud-Din and gave him facilities to carry on his

[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, Page 334.

proselytising activities. But only a few years after the Shia divine was forced to flee when with the help of Ibrahim Magre and others Mohammed Shah defeated Fath Shah in a battle in 1493 A.C. Under the new regime Mir Shams-ud-Din Iraqi was banished which incensed Chaks and those Kashmiris who had accepted the Shia faith. In all the subsequent regimes the Shia-Sunni feud played a prominent part and heinous crimes were committed by politicians in the name of religion. To the devastating Hindu-Muslim strife was now added the demoralising Sunni-Shia conflict which made the lot of the people most miserable.

It was not surprising that, under these disturbed conditions, a general restlessness existed in the valley among all classes of people and Babur, the Mughal adventurer, who had already captured Delhi, should try his luck in Kashmir too. The wonder however is that even in such deteriorated times these cantenkerous nobles should forget their own quarrels and enmities, bury the hatchet and offer a joint front to the foreign invader. The nobles rallied round one man to defend their country. Such a leader was Kaji Chak who, fired with the spirit of patriotism, commanded an army, met the invading Mughals and forced them to retire. But this love of the motherland was only skin-deep. Politics, born of party, clique, group or communal mentality never allows one to adopt high principles of patriotism and humanism for long. Not many years after this incident, the prominent leaders of Magres and Chaks and other nobles themselves, turn by turn, approached the Emperors at Delhi to attack Kashmir and bring it under their suzerainty. The first to do so was Abdal Magre, rival of Kaji Chak. Abdal secured a large army from Babur and invaded Kashmir when Ibrahim Shah, a puppet in the hands of Kaji Chak, was on the throne.

A very interesting thing happened at this time. It appears Babur had fully realized the force of Kashmir Nationalism which foiled his first campaign. He therefore played a trick to hoodwink the Kashmiris. He used a scion of the Shah Miri dynasty, one Nazuk Khan, as a tool declaring that the

people of Kashmir disliked Ibrahim Shah and wanted Nazuk Khan to be on the throne. This was done with the view that the Kashmiris might not think that foreign rule was to be imposed upon them at the successful termination of the invasion. Strangely enough, when Kazi Chak and his puppet were defeated and forced to flee, Nazuk Khan did not rule for more than a few months. He was deposed and Mohammed Shah, an ex-king, was re-installed on the throne.

However, Mughals again failed to establish their supremacy because of the vicissitudes of Humayun's luck in the beginning of his reign. But the Mughal invasion came in another shape and from the north. Abu-Sayyid Mirza, King of Kashgar, sent an army under the leadership of his son Sultanzada Sikandar and a soldier-statesman Mirza Haider Dughlat to attack Kashmir and conquer it. Kashmir Nationalism again rose up to the occasion. Kaji Chak came to its rescue once more. But this time it ended unhappily. The Mughals inflicted a crushing defeat on the Kashmiris The vanquished forces were pursued, captured and slain mercilessly. But this did not dishearten the Kashmiris. Indeed it only forced Magres and Chaks to forget the past. Both Abdal Magre and Kaji Chak combined their forces and pressed the Mughals so hard that the invaders were compelled to sue for peace. The Mughals retired but left behind them death, desolation and hunger. The people were reminded of the days when Dulcha and Urdil had devastated their beautiful land.

This victory did not produce any sobriety or humility in the nobles. They were quite blind to the misery all round. Flushed with his power which increased immensely by now, Kaji Chak became vain, conceited and cruel. He advanced his own interests and contracted matrimonial relations with the royal dynasty. This, coupled with his high-handed behaviour, made him unpopular with the people and an object of jealousy for the nobles and rival politicians. The Magres approached Humayun but though he could not directly help, being himself harassed by Sher Shah Sur, the Mughal Emperor allowed Mirza Haider Dughlat to lead an expedition to help

Magres. This was the third attempt of the Mughals. Kashmir was in utter confusion in 1540 A.C. Therefore the Mirza easily defeated the Kashmir forces and deposed King Ibrahim Shah II. Kaji Chak fled and approached Sher Shah Sur for help.

Mirza Haider was a shrewd politician and had known to his cost the intensity of Kashmir Nationalism. He considered it indiscreet to occupy the throne himself. He put ex-King Nazuk Shah on it and himself remained content with being the power behind the throne. It seems he wanted to be liberal and progressive. But he fell out firstly with Chaks and soon with all Shias. Kaji Chak obtained an army of five hundred horsemen from Sher Shah Sur and invaded Kashmir but was defeated. This incident aggravated the bitterness between Mirza Haider and the Shia community. He resorted to ruthlessness, cruelty, torture and suppression. Many Shias were wantonly killed. Even Daniyal, the son of Mir Shamsud-Din Iraqi, was not spared and was executed. This was in violation of the time-honoured traditions of Kashmir. A rebellion broke out under the leadership of Idi Raina, Hussain Magre, Mohammed Kaji and Haji Bande. Both Shias and non-Shias joined the insurrection in which the partisans of Mirza were routed and he himself was slain. Mirza wanted to exterminate the Shias and establish the sole supremacy of the Sunnis in Kashmir but ultimately he was consumed by the fire of the religious strife which he himself had ignited. After the fall of Mirza Haider, Idi Raina became the Prime Minister and the influence of Chaks grew unprecedented. Kaji Chak had meanwhile died but Ghazi Chak and Daulat Chak both Shias had risen to power. The descendants of Shah Mir were now kings only in name and were puppets in the hands of the Chaks. One day, in 1555 A.C., Ghazi Chak's brother Ali Chak took off the crown from the head of Sultan Habib Shah, the last king of the dynasty, in the open court and placed it on the head of his brother. This was the recognition of a fact and the end of a farce about the rulership of the land. All the courtiers hailed Ghazi Chak as the monarch. "There

appears to be no cause of lamentation over the displacement of the Shah Miri dynasty in Kashmir", says Sufi. "Its rulers had become quite effete. They sadly lacked the essential qualities of initiative and capacity to command. They also displayed weakness of character, and were not, therefore, capable of holding their place. It was only by divine mercy, or it might be said, the diffidence of the Chaks, that they were allowed to maintain the role of supernumerary kings under Chak domination. As a matter of fact, they should have long been displaced to make room for kings of vigour and virility".[1] Like Hindu Rajas of later period these Sultans had become debauched, corrupt, cruel, wicked and dehumanised.

The small period of thirty-one years for which the Chaks ruled over Kashmir from 1555-1586 A.C., was characterised by religious fanaticism, ruthlessness, insecurity and poverty which they had inherited from the previous regime. Having been persecuted and ill-treated by Sunni politicians, the Chaks became narrow-minded and sectarian in views. They did not trust the non-Shias and were suspicious of every one outside their fold. Only Shias were recruited into the Army and most of the high posts in Government were also given to them.

Ghazi Shah persecuted Khwaja Tahir Rafiq Suhawardi, disciple of the Saint Hamza Makhdum and a religious leader of the Sunnis. He had to go into hiding and was given shelter by a Brahmin of Verinag, Aidar Suh. Many other Sunni preachers and divines were similarly hidden by their Pandit compatriots during Ghazi Shah's reign.

Hussain Shah Chak (1563-1570 A.C.) founded a college and lived in the society of pious and learned men in its precincts. He was a prince of very catholic views and tried to revive the liberalism and broad-mindedness in State affairs. "When such a king ruled Kashmira", writes Shuka, "the land became full with abundant crops of fruits and flowers. The king dispelled the fear from famine, from thief and from foreign potentate, and the people believed the Kingdom of Kashmira to be equal to heaven."[2] Hussain Shah set aside three days in a

[1] *Kashir*, Vol. I, Page 212.
[2] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, Page 392.

week to listen to the discourses of Muslim and Hindu religious scholars, but the times did not sympathise with him. The rot of fanaticism had set in which he could not check from spreading. Clashes between Shias and Sunnis reached a climax during his time. In 1568 A.C. a Shia fanatic attacked and wounded a Sunni preacher. Under orders of the king the fanatic was tried by two divines and found guilty. He was stoned to death. Just at this time two envoys from Akbar came to Kashmir. Being Shia they interested themselves in this incident and got the two divines tried by a Shia official. The official got the divines executed and their bodies were dragged through the streets. The authority of the Kashmir Kings had become so nominal that Hussain Shah proved helpless before Akbar's envoys who so easily and wantonly violated the sovereignty of the State by meddling into the internal matters and taking law in their own hands. Not the king but a deputation of Kashmiris approached Akbar and complained to him. Akbar accepted the appeal and on the return of the envoys, had them executed for religious bigotry.

Those who succeeded Hussain Shah did not even attempt to improve the matters. They were ease-loving, short-sighted, intolerant, mean and chicken-hearted. Yusuf Shah Chak (1574-1586 A.D.), the lover of the great poetess Habba Khatun, took more interest in romance than in the affairs of the State. The nobles became restive and rebelled. Confusion ensued. One of the nobles Sayyid Mubarak Khan Baihaqi was so influential that he assumed kingship for a few months in 1579 A.C. after deposing Yusuf Shah for his insolent behaviour. Baihaqi was an interesting person. He was of a philosophic bent of mind and humane in nature. He distributed his wealth among the needy; he even broke up his royal crown and gave the gems to the poor. He treated his nobles and courtiers like ordinary citizens. Clearly he was much in advance of his times. The haughty nobles and other upper classes joined hands to overthrow him. Shuka says that Momara Khan (Mubarak Khan) was imprisoned by his opponents after he had enjoyed the kingdom for one and a fourth of a month and all along he lived

in a temple.[1] But other historians write that before a battle would decide his fortune Mubarak Khan willingly abdicated in favour of Lohur Chak, a cousin of Usuf Chak. But Usuf defeated Lohur and regained the throne. Akbar was anxious to have the Valley and when he saw that the Chaks had made themselves unpopular he issued instructions to Raja Man Singh on 20 December 1585 A.C., to invade Kashmir. On getting information that the Mughal armies were on the march and about to enter the Valley the chicken-hearted Usuf Shah shivered. He was prepared to capitulate on terms which Man Singh accepted and advised the King of Kashmir to present himself before Akbar. The Mughal Emperor however rejected the terms and disallowed Usuf to return to his homeland. The sensitive Hindu General was deeply pained to find his pledged word dishonoured and committed suicide. Usuf was sent to Bihar where as a *jagirdar* he remained till the end of his life.

Meanwhile, as a last flicker of the dying Kashmir Nationalism, the patriotic nobles put Usuf's son Yaqub Khan on the throne and fought vigorously against the Mughal armies who suffered heavily owing to cold, scarcity of foodstuffs and difficulties of transport in the hilly regions and were prepared to return on any terms. But Yaqub Shah proved unfit as a ruler. His ministers relentlessly persecuted the Sunnis. The king got one Musa, Chief Qazi, killed in a cruel way. A deputation of Kashmiris led by Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi and Baba Daud Khaki waited upon Akbar and prayed for help to liberate the Valley from the tyranny and misrule of the Chaks. The patriots took care to see that the new rule did not prove worse than the one under which they were suffering. Therefore before assuring the Mughal emperor of the support of the Kashmiris in his annexation of the Valley to the Empire they entered into the following covenant with him:

1. That the ruling prince shall not interfere in religious affairs, the purchase and sale of commodities and the rates of cereals.
2. That the inhabitants of the country shall not be molested or oppressed in anyway or *begar* exacted from them.
3. That the dignitaries and officials of Kashmir shall have no Kashmiri male or female, Hindu or Muslim, as slave.
4. That the nobles of Kashmir having been a source of mischief shall have, for the present, no share in the administration of their country.

[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, Page 397.

Two points in this covenant deserve notice. First, that it is entirely secular in character. It is meant to equally preserve the freedom of all Kashmiris irrespective of the religion they profess. Secondly, it is concerned about the welfare and freedom of the masses and not the upper classes. Indeed it is specifically against the interests of the nobles and the feudal lords.

When therefore the huge Imperial Armies of the Mughal Emperor marched upon Kashmir on 28th June, 1586 A.C., they did not meet with any great resistance. The unhappy Kashmiris welcomed the invaders as if they were entering the Valley to liberate them.

The Mughal rule lasted in the Valley for 166 years till 1752 A.C. Kashmir now became a province of the Indian Empire and was administered through the governors appointed by the Mughal Emperors. In all, sixty-three governors were deputed by the different Emperors to rule over the Valley. In the reign of Shah Alam, the governors appointed started a new baneful and pernicious practice of deputing their representatives to administer the country in their behalf while they themselves were engaged elsewhere with more important political affairs.

The rule of the governors on the whole did not prove satisfactory and beneficial for the people of the Valley. Some of them no doubt were benevolent, progressive and popular, who did a lot to improve the political and economic conditions but there were many others who proved to be tyrannical, barbarous and uncultured. They encouraged Hindu-Muslim factions and Sunni-Shia feuds or levied imposts and taxes on the

toiling classes which made their condition quite miserable. Time and again the people approached the Emperors to intervene and check the high-handed, anti-social and despotic behaviour of such governors and it should be said to the credit of the Mughal Kings that on various occasions they readily and sympathetically responded to the appeals of the victimised Kashmiris. The Mughal Emperors took keen personal interest in the affairs of Kashmir. Almost all of them had married Kashmiri women to beget fair-complexioned children. So long as the Central Government at Delhi remained stable, strong and progressive Kashmir more or less shared prosperity with other provinces and regions of the Empire. But when, in the later part of Aurangzeb's reign, the Mughal rule began to show signs of decline, Kashmir also was involved in confusion and chaos.

The first Viceroy of Kashmir whom Akbar appointed was Qasim Khan Mir Bahr who had conquered the country for the Mughals in a war against Yaqub. He did not find it easy to rule. The vanquished Kashmir nobles made a last bid to regain power, attacked the Mughals at Cherwani, a village in Badgam tehsil, and entered Srinagar under the leadership of the defeated ruler, Yaqub Shah Chak, who was again declared as King. But this success proved short-lived; for when the Mughals received reinforcements from Delhi the fifty-one days rebellion was put down and the insurgents severely punished. Yaqub Khan fled to Kishtwar where he got refuge under the raja who was his father-in-law.

In May, 1589 A.C., Akbar himself visited Kashmir and took personal interest in the affairs of the newly annexed State. He issued instructions that the Imperial Army should be confined to a place distant from the city and strictly forbade soldiers to molest the people. On the representation of the local leaders the Emperor gave orders to institute an inquiry into the method by which revenue and other taxes were gathered. Consequently all undue imposts were relaxed and the revenue system in the Valley was brought in line with the rest of the Mughal Empire.

To relieve the poverty-stricken people of their woeful economic conditions, Akbar built the Nagar Nagar around the slopes of Hari Parbat. The work was completed at a cost of one crore and ten lakhs and provided work to the thousands of unemployed in the Valley. The Emperor visited the Hindu *Tirthas* (shrines), gave gifts of gold to Brahmins and at Martanda temple made presents of cows adorned with pearls to the *purohits* of the sacred tank.

Akbar revisited the Valley twice in 1552 A.C. and in 1597 A.C. Every time that he came, he did his best to redress the grievances of the people. It was in his time that the high road to Kashmir from Gujrat in the Punjab via Bhimbar, Rajuari and Shopian to Srinagar was re-aligned and constructed by Mohammed Qasim, the Emperor's Chief Engineer. Probably owing to its age-old connection with Gandhara, Akbar included Kabul and Qandhar in the Kashmir Province.

During the time of the Chaks, Kashmir had lost all the adjoining territories that Shah Miris, particularly Shahab-ud-Din, the Great Conqueror, had subdued. The Mughals invaded Tibet and defeated its ruler Aju Rai who was made to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Delhi Government.

Towards the end of Akbar's rule a devastating famine decimated the population of the Valley. It was so serious that poor peasants actually sold their children for a mess of pottage. The Emperor promptly sent grains from Sialkot and Lahore to relieve the distress of the famishing masses.

When the romantic and pleasure-loving Jahangir came to the Mughal throne, Kashmir became the favourite province of the Empire. Jahangir was a lover of nature and it was not surprising that the scenic beauties of the Valley appealed to his mind particularly. He visited Kashmir along with his beloved spouse, Nur Jahan, almost every year. He used to say that if he lost whole of his empire but Kashmir remained with him he would not mind. This lover of the beautiful land died near Bahramgulla while on his way to the Valley.

Some of the Mughal Governors had misbehaved themselves when Jahangir ascended the throne. Qulich Khan and Sadat

Khan suppressed not only the deposed Chaks but also independence-loving nobles of Kashmir with ruthlessness. They humiliated many leaders of the country especially Hindus who cherished patriotic views. Another governor, Itiqad Khan, did not feel content with this. He imposed severe, unjust restrictions and unwarranted imposts on the toiling classes particularly the agriculturists. He requisitioned fruit gardens and reserved forests and villages for the governmental use. He attached all the land growing saffron at Pampur for imperial purposes and impressed forced labour to pluck and gather the flowers. No wages were paid for this work except a little salt. He introduced another practice of levying four *dams* on each *khirwar* of rice. He levied a poll-tax of seventy-five *dams* on each boatman old or young. A village whose rental was more than 400 *khirwars* of *shali*, was made to pay two sheep to the authorities. Itiqad Khan took sixty-six *dams* in place of each sheep. During the fruit season, the governors used to place their own men in the fruit gardens and take away the best part of the produce for themselves with the result that many Kashmiris destroy ed their gardens to avoid the depredations of the greedy *subedars*.

The Hindus of Kashmir complained to Jahangir against Qulich Khan who promptly sent a note to the Governor tersely but firmly telling him : "Complainants against you are many thanks-givers few; you should either pour cloud-water on the thirsty people or relinquish the high post of governance." Needless to say that Qulich Khan was finally discharged and turned out of Kashmir

Jahangir also revoked some if not all the imposts that had been unjustly levied by the unpopular governors. In 1621 A.C. the Emperor abolished the vexatious tax known as the Rasum-i-Faujdari. Jahangir interested himself in the social problems of the State people. In 1619 A.C., he prohibited the strangulation of daughters at birth which evil practice was in vogue among some classes of Hindus as well as Muslims. The same year he forbade the immolation of Muslim women in Rajauri who, like Hindu widows, consigned themselves to flames along with the remains of their husbands. Jahangir appointed a

Kashmiri Pandit, Sri Kanth, as a judge for the Hindus in order that, in every case of personal law, they may enjoy perfect liberty and be adjudged according to the provisions of their own religion and *Shastras*.

During the reign of Jahangir, Kishtwar which had declared its independence with the decline of Chak rule was re-conquered and annexed.

In 1617 A.C. plague broke out in the Valley in a virulent form when people died like flies. "Things had come to such a pass that from fear of death, fathers would not approach their children and children would not go near their fathers", wrote Jahangir in his *Memoirs*. "A strange thing was that in the ward, in which the disease began, a fire broke out and nearly 3,000 houses were burnt."

But despite this calamity and the harshness of certain governors, Kashmir enjoyed rest and happiness under Jahangir which it had not witnessed for more than a century. It is estimated that the Valley contributed no less than 7,46,70,000 *dams* as revenue to the State coffers, which indicates the period of prosperity through which the country passed.

Shah Jahan visited Kashmir six times during the period of his rule. His first visit took place in 1634 A.C. and the last in 1651 A.C. He deputed nine governors in all, one of whom was Prince Murad who ruled for a year in 1640 A.C. Zaffar Khan was the most efficient, benevolent and kind-hearted of all these governors. He subjugated Baltistan where the defeated but still rebellious Chaks had taken asylum. "Zaffar is chiefly remembered for the removal of hardships which Itiqad Khan had imposed upon the people of Kashmir and which were beautifully brought to the notice of Shah Jahan by a Kashmiri poet in a striking poem in honour of the Emperor's birth-day," writes Sufi, "The poet in the first couplet addressed the Emperor saying that we have a plaint in your majest'y court. In the second couplet the poet says that saffron causes the sad and the sorry to laugh but here innocent people are made to weep on account of saffron."[1] Shah Jahan issued commands

[1] *Kashir*, Vol. I, Pp. 268-69.

revoking all the unjust taxes which were the cause of distress and misery of the subjects and inhabitants of these regions. The *firman* contained the details of these imposts and as it was intended by the Emperor "that noble governors and competent collectors and the officials of this and future times in the Province of Kashmir should consider these orders as lasting and eternal" the commands were engraved on a stone and put into the masonry of the gate of the Jama Masjid in Srinagar where it lies to this day. Zaffar Khan became so popular with the people of Kashmir that he was deputed three times to administer the province. He came first in 1631 A.C. as the lieutenant of his father, Mirza Abdul Hassan, when he proved his worth. Subsequently he ruled as governor in his own right from 1632-39 A.C.

Another popular governor was Ali Mardan Khan who became famous for his generosity and was credited with the possession of the philosopher's stone.

Shah Jahan's dealings with the Kashmir people, as with those of the other parts of his vast kingdom, were like that of a father than that of an Emperor. When a big famine broke out in the Valley, Shah Jahan exported corn from Lahore, Jallundhur and other cities of the Punjab and distributed the same free of price among the poorer classes. At the time of Shah Jahan's death, the Valley was so contented and prosperous that a *Khirwar* of paddy was selling for a few annas or in exchange for a fowl.

Aurangzeb visited the Valley only once in 1634 A.C. and that too to recoup his health which had received a set-back owing to serious illness. He was accompanied by his beloved daughter Roshan Ara. This Emperor deputed fourteen governors of whom Ibrahim Khan was appointed thrice and Saif Khan twice to administer the country. All the governors generally reflected in their actions the policy of the Emperor which was marked by intolerance, bigotry and short-sightedness. Two of them, Muzzafar Khan and Abu Nasar Khan, were particularly harsh and ruthless. The former was responsible for levying new taxes and the latter for encouraging factions

and feuds. Both suppressed and oppressed the people especially the Hindus.

It is interesting to note that, in 1670 A.C., Governor Saif Khan took a census of the population and it was recorded that in all 12,43,033 people lived in the Valley.

During Aurangzeb's reign two Kashmiris rose to fame and power. One of them was Khwaja Inayat Ullah who ascended rung after rung of the ladder of administrative service till finally he became the Revenue Minister of the Imperial Government under Farrukh Siyar and was also deputed as a governor of his own native land. Another Kashmiri was Mohammed Murad who was given the distinguished post of *Haft Hazari* and command over ten thousand *sowars* with the title of Rukun-ud-Daula.

The latter part of Aurangzeb's reign started disorder in the Valley. Hindus were already in a mood of rebellion. To this was added the clash among the Muslims themselves as in the days of the Chaks. "Sectarian fights between the Shias and Sunnis were not uncommon in those days", says Sufi. "Religious feelings were bitter everywhere. It was particularly so in Kashmir where Mir Shams-ud-Din Iraqi's successful propagation of Shiaite doctrines had proved fruitful. The minds of both Shias and Sunnis were therefore in a state of frenzy. Moreover, as fresh converts, the Shias must have been zealous, at times, fanatical. The Chaks who were Shias by faith, had lost their domination only recently. The aggrieved minds of Shias looked upon this fact both as personal and religious grievance. It is therefore not surprising that riots and disturbances between the Shias and Sunnis were not unusual."[1] In fairness to Shias it may be added to this that the treatment of this small community by many Sunni Governors under the Mughals was anything but just and equitous. While attempting to exterminate the defeated but defiant Chaks the Mughal Governors oppressed and suppressed the entire Shia sect.

With the decline of the Mughal rule at the death of

[1] *Kashir*, Vol. I, Page 277.

Aurangzeb, Kashmir entered a period of unrest. The governors ruled while sitting at Delhi through their representatives.. The Central Government having weakened and the Emperors having become play-things in the hands of power politicians, the governors of provinces virtually ruled independently and irresponsibly; everyone was intent upon making hay while the sun was shining. Poor people of Kashmir had to suffer immensely and they were driven again and again to rise in revolt against the tyrants, adventurers, looters and fanatics who came as either governors or their *naibs* (representatives).

"In Mohammed Shah's reign the history of Kashmir presents little else but a record of local riots and internecine struggles", says Sufi. A significant event occured in 1620 A.C. when the victimised Pandits and Shias joined hands to fight against the tyranny of the rulers who were carrying on the policy of cruel and ruthless persecution in the name of religion. Mahbub Khan, a Mulla, had become Sheikh-ul-Islam of Kashmir in the time of Shah Alam Bahadur. He was a landlord. A Pandit clerk, in discharge of his official duty, demanded some dues or illegal gratification from the agents of the Mulla which incensed him. Forthwith Mahbub Khan issued a *fatwa* instructing Muslims to boycott the entire Pandit community. He also forbade Pandits to wear turban on their heads, to ride, to put *tilak* (vermillion mark on the forehead), to have *choti* or to perform *puja*. This proved to be a signal for revolt. The policy of oppression by the authorities had already prepared the ground. The Pandits and the Shias cooperated and raised the banner of rebellion. Riots ensued. The Mulla was murdered by a faction of the Shias. His younger sons were also put to death.[1] Mir Ahmed Khan, the *naib* of Governor Inayat Ullah Khan, failed to control the situation; so did another *naib* Abdullah Khan. The third *naib* Mumin Khan also met with no better fate; so widespread were the disorder and the insurrection. Mulla Sharaf-ud-Din, son of the assassinated Mahbub Khan, roused the fanaticism of the bigoted sections of the Sunni Muslims to the highest pitch and much innocent blood

[1] *Kashir*, Vol. I, Page 291.

of Pandits and Shias was shed in the turmoil. The cultured and freedom-loving sections of all the communities including the Sunnis detested the nefarious activities of the Mulla and his gang. Finally the Delhi Government was forced to depute Samad Khan, Viceroy of Lahore, to quell the disturbances. He reached Srinagar and summarily put Mulla Sharaf-ud-Din to death and hanged fifty of his accomplices. He also removed all restrictions that the Sheikh-ul-Islam had imposed on the religious and the political freedom of the Pandit and the Shia communities. Samad Khan's even-handed justice was celebrated and sung by the people of Kashmir in the verse:

'Haqqa av Samud phutran zin
Na rud kunih Sharuf na rud kunih Din.'

which means that Samad Khan came with such terrific rush breaking hooliganism that there remained neither Sharaf-ud-Din nor fanaticism anywhere.

But Samad Khan's benevolent despotism and statesmanship did not stop the rot that had set in mainly due to the fast declining Mughal rule. The *subedars* who followed savagely oppressed the people by wanton acts of cruelty. One Aghur Khan made himself so hateful and despicable that the people chased him and turned him out of Srinagar. He was immediately dismissed. When Nadir Shah sacked Delhi and shook the Mughal Government to its foundations in 1739 A.C. Kashmir began to waver in its loyalty. The Governor Fakhr-ud-Daula ruled for forty days in the name of Nadir Shah but had subsequently to serve as the *naib* of Inayat Ullah Khan who was appointed as *subedar* by the Mughal Emperor.

The more Mughals were involved in dissensions and internal strife, the more deteriorated became the conditions in the Valley. Ultimately anarchy ensued and there was practically no Government in the country. In their desperation two nobles of Kashmir, Mir Muqim and Zahir Didamari, approached Ahmad Shah Durrani in the time-honoured manner and craved his help to establish an organised government in Kashmir. Ahmad Shah had already secured the Punjab from the Mughals in 1751 A.C. and was at the time making prepa-

rations for another invasion on Hindustan. There was no need to persuade him to conquer Kashmir. He forthwith dispatched a big army which met the forces of the nominal Mughal Nazim at Gund Niamat near Shopian. A crushing defeat was inflicted upon Abdul Qasim, the Nazim, who tried to escape but was taken prisoner. Thus passed the beautiful valley of Kashmir into the hands of the Afghans in 1752 A.C.

An era of the Kashmir History ends with the down-fall of the Mughal rule in the Valley. Before we pass on to trace the Freedom Movement of Kashmiris under the Afghans it is proper that we should review their cultural progress during the medieval times.

CHAPTER FOUR

CULTURAL RESURGENCE UNDER MUSLIMS

AS already stated, Muslims did not come to the Valley as foreign conquerors as they did in the rest of India. It was by a strange and fortuitous combination of circumstances that Shah Mir ascended the throne in 1339 A.C. He had served for more than twenty-six years under the last Hindu rulers as an official and rendered various public services from time to time. It was the period of history when the Hindu society was disintegrating, its polity had reached a dead end and the old traditions were rapidly declining. Had Shah Mir and his descendants confined themselves to the capture of political power, it is probable they would have suffered the same fate as the Hindu rulers of the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries. But wisely did the Muslim kings take keen interest in the revival of the cultural life of the people and not only proved instrumental in the preservation of the positive achievements of Hinduism in the Valley but also enriched and broadened the cultural heritage of the country by introducing the liberating and revolutionary principles on which the social philosophy of Islam stands. It was this sagacious policy which restored peace, progress and prosperity and firmly established the Muslim rule in the Valley which lasted nearly 500 years.

We know that Rinchen was converted to Islam by Sayyid Bilal, popularly known as Bulbul Shah, and he was the first Muslim ruler of the Valley who ascended the throne in 1319 A.C. with the title of Sultan Saddar-ud-Din. But at his death, Islam suffered a reverse in the Valley when Kota Rani invited Udyanadeva and installed him as the king. The revival of Hindu rule, however, proved short-lived and in 1339 A.C., with the defeat of Kota Rani at Anderkot, it came to an end.

Meanwhile, Bulbul Shah had died in 1327 A.C. But when with the capture of power by Shah Mir, news of the establish-

ment of Muslim rule went abroad, zealous missionaries of Islam began to pour into the Valley by hundreds. Among them were two brothers Sayyid Taj-ud-Din and Sayyid Hussain Simnani who were sent by Sayyid Mir Ali Hamadani "probably to survey the field for the propagation of Islam", but certainly also "to find means of escape from Timur, who was suspected of contemplating, from political motives, the massacre of this powerful Sayyid family".[1] Shah Hamadan himself visited the Valley for the first time in 1372 A.C. and on second occasion in 1377 A.C. He was accompanied by seven hundred Sayyids.

With the influx of such a large number of preachers and propagandists of the new faith, there ensued an ideological, intellectual and spiritual warfare in the Valley that could be compared only with a similar clash of ideas during the period when Buddhism was introduced in the country during the benignant rule of Asoka. The Sayyids were expounding principles, tenets, dogmas and philosophy of life that were in crass contradiction to the views held by the orthodox and conservative sections among the Hindus. It was a challenge to the caste-ridden Brahmins who, as during the period of the spread of Buddhism, fiercely resisted the then new faith and tried to put back the hands of the clock of progress.

But the protest of the reactionary Brahmins was a cry in the wilderness; it was destined to fail. For Shaivism had already prepared the ground for the seed of Islam to grow in the Valley. The followers of the *Trika* philosophy, the large majority of the Hindu community, did not find anything harmful or malignant in the teachings of Islam. Indeed its absolute monotheism appealed to the Shaiva philosophers who enthusiastically welcomed it. Only they were careful to see that the positive achievements of the age-old cultural struggle of the people of Kashmir were not destroyed by the adoption of the New Faith in any way.

The stiff and strong opposition to Islam of the anti-progressive Brahmins on the one hand and its critical appreciation by the Shaivite philosophers on the other finally resulted in the

[1] *Kashir*, Vol. I, Page 84.

emergence of a new dynamic composite culture in Kashmir which may be called idealistic, sentimental or religious Humanism. It is eclectic in its essence and contains the noble truths and glorious cultural gains of both Shaivism and Islam which they have achieved in the course of their long histories.

The first votary and apostle of Religious Humanism in Kashmir was the hermitess Lalla. She was born in 1335 A.C. at Pandrethan in a Pandit family. From early in life, she refused to conform to the established traditions, dogmas and rituals of Brahminism. In utter disregard of her intensely spiritual behaviour, she was married into an orthodox Brahmin household with the result that she had to pass a period of torture and tyranny at the hands of her mother-in-law and her husband. Finally after much suffering she abandoned her home and roamed about from place to place in rags, singing and dancing in a half-nude condition. In these wanderings, she came under the influence of a Shaivite, Sidh Bayu, who gave her lessons on the *Trika* philosophy and the ancient culture of the Valley.

When Shah Hamadan arrived in Kashmir, Lalla met him and had prolonged discussions with him on philosophy, religion and spiritualism. This proved to be a turning point in her life. Having assimilated the basic teachings of both Shaivism and Islam, Lalla became the harbinger of the resurgence movement in Kashmir. Both the Hindus and the Muslims acclaimed her as their spiritual preceptor, as their friend, philosopher and guide and as the prophet of the new Kashmir which was rising from the ashes of the old. While the Hindus reverentially call her Laleshwari, or Lalla Yogeshwari, the Muslims affectionately remember her by the name of Lalla Maji. She is, however, commonly known throughout the Valley and even beyond by the beloved appellation of Lal Ded (Mother Lalla).

Lalla lived till a ripe old age and while Hindus believe that she evaporated in the thin air and became one with the Universal Self according to the Shaivite Faith, the Muslims point to a grave near the Jama Masjid at Bijbihara where they believe she was buried in accordance with the Islamic rites.

Like Buddha, Lal Ded preached her doctrines in the langu-

age of the masses and not in the refined, polished and high-flown Sanskrit, the language of the scholars and the upper classes. Her sayings known as *Lallavaka* are in ancient Kashmiri and the parts that were preserved have been translated into English, Sanskrit and some other languages by eminent scholars. Self-denial, purity of life, renunciation and non-attachment are the key-note of Lalla's teachings. It is only when a man has brought his senses under control and secured freedom from desire, lust and pride that he can attain supreme bliss ; says she :

'All impurities within me I burnt away,
And I did slay my heart,
I came to be known as the pious Lalla,
Only when I cleaved into him there ;
Only when I sat, just there, waiting for His grace.'

In the absence of any mental discipline no spiritual progress is possible :

'Some have abandoned home
Some the forest abode
What use a hermitage if thou controllest not thy minds.'

Adherence to formalities of religion and conformity with the traditions of the society cannot bring inner peace:

'Think not of the things that are without ;
Fix upon thy inner self thy thought :
So shalt thou be freed from let or doubt ;
Precepts these that my Preceptor taught.
Dance, then, Lalla, clothed but by the air ;
Sing, then, Lalla, clad but in the sky ;
Air and sky : what garment is more fair ;
'Cloth' saith custom. Doth that sanctify ?

Lal Ded taught that only by losing all consciousness of limited individuality and becoming absorbed in the limitless pure consciousness one could attain Nirvana, the eternal bliss :

'The holy books disappearing, the mystic formula remains,
The mystic formula vanishing, Mind alone is left :
The void (the apparent) merges into the void (the Transcendent)'.

These sayings, as the reader will easily observe, were in line with the *Trika* philosophy. But Lalla did not end here. She unreservedly denounced dogmas, rituals, narrow-minded reaction and debasing distinction of caste. She took the positive stand that equality, human brotherhood, love and sincerity were

the core of religion. She acknowledged the essential oneness in the basic philosophies of all creeds and religions. She was willing to adopt any one of the divinities which helped her to attain the final goal of complete freedom. "Whether it be Shiva (of Shaivites) or Keshave (of Brahmins) or Kamala-Janatha (Brahma) or Jina (the deity of the Buddhists or the Jains)", Lalla used to say, "by whatever name a worshipper may call the Supreme, He is still the supreme and He alone can release." She sang :

'Idol is of stone, temple is of stones ;
Above (temple) and below (idol) are one :
Which of them will thou worship, 0, foolish Pandit ?
Cause thou the union of mind and soul.'

Lalla was a Muslim Sufi as well as a Hindu Shaivite ; she said :

'The same stone is in the road and in the pedestal :
The same stone is the sacred place ;
The same stone is the turning mill ;
Shiva is difficult to be attained, take a hint of guidance (from thy Guru)'.

The influence of Sufism on her is clear from many of her sayings. "He who has love and confidence on the word of the Guru, he who controls the horse of mind by the bridle of knowledge, he who enjoys peace having subdued his senses, then who will die and whom will they kill ?" Lalla was fully conscious of her historic role as the prophet of resurgence in Kashmir. She knew that the dynamic philosophy she was preaching and the composite culture that she was founding were bound to open an era of human brotherhood in Kashmir in which the differences of caste and creed, birth and position would be meaningless : She declared :

'The time is coming when seven generations will sink to hell,
When ultimately showers of rain and dust will fall,
When plates of flesh and wine cups,
Brahmins and sweepers will take together.'

Lalla believed in moderation and was an advocate of the Middle Path. "By overeating you will not achieve anything and by not eating at all you will become conceited by considering yourself an ascetic", she said."Eat therefore moderately O darling! and you will remain balanced. By eating moderately all the doors (of success) will be unbolted for you." In the search of

truth and the ultimate goal of freedom Lalla's philosophy knew no failure. To work, to strive in spite of the repeated set-backs and finally to attain the objective was what she taught :

'Searching and seeking Him, I, Lalla wearied myself
And beyond my strength I strove
Then, looking for Him, I found His doors closed and latched.
This deepened my longing and stiffened my resolve ;
And I would not move but stood where I was,
Full of longing and love, I gazed on Him.'

And what happened thereafter :

'Passionate, with longing in my eyes, searching wide and seeking night and day,
Lo ! I beheld the Truthful one, the Wise,
Here in mine own House to fill my gaze.
That was the day of my lucky star,
Breathless, I hold him my Guide to be.'

Man is the master of himself, the forger of his own destiny, the builder of his own future. He need not seek the help of any unseen powers beyond himself. Let him have faith in himself to achieve freedom. This in nutshell was the message of Humanism that emerged from the fusion of the two religious philosophies of Shaivism and Islam and of which Lal Ded was the first apostle as well as the Prophet. Lalla not only preached the new cult during the course of her wanderings throughout the length and breadth of the Valley, she also practised it in her own life.

Obviously there is contradiction in the teachings of Lalla. Her philosophy merges the individual with a spiritual collectivity. She taught mysticism and collectivism. At the same time she asked man to have faith in himself and seek no assistance from outside. But Lalla could not help it as such contradictions are inherent in all idealistic philosophies.

Like all the great prophets and benefactors of humanity, Lalla was considered mad and crazy in the beginning. The worldly wise people ridiculed her and even teased her but ultimately she triumphed and became the most popular figure in her homeland. She died nearly six hundred years ago but people of Kashmir, both intellectuals and the illiterate rural masses, even to this day sing the songs of Lal Ded.

While Lalla was still alive, another Master of the Resurgence Movement, Sheikh Noor-ud-Din, was born in 1377 A.C. in the village of Kaimuh. His great grand father was a Hindu Raja of Kishtwar, who had been killed in a civil strife. Consequently the family ran away from their native place and took shelter in the Valley. The father of Noor-ud-Din, Sheikh Salar-ud-Din, came in contact with Sayyid Hussain Simnani and was converted to Islam.

There is a legend that at the time of his birth, Noor-ud-Din refused to suck the breasts of his mother Sudra and when he was brought into the presence of Lalla, she rebuked the new-born infant for his false renunciation, and he immediately began to have his natural nourishment. From very early in his life, Noor-ud-Din manifested his aversion for formalities of religion and the traditional education imparted in the schools and *muktabs* under Mullas. He loved quiet solitude and remained absorbed in deep contemplation for hours. Evidently he was in desperate search for a solution of the eternal problem of existence. He was no longer a part of the life that surrounded him. To all his relatives, friends and neighbours, his behaviour appeared strange but unmindful of all this, he continued his struggle.

While Noor-ud-Din was undergoing the terrible mental and spiritual turmoil, he sought the guidance of Lalla who initiated him into the secrets and the mysteries of the cult of Religious Humanism. It at once deeply influenced him and he attained the inner peace, calm and poise for which he had been pining for years.

Sheikh Noor-ud-Din lived a perfectly saintly life and remained devoted to the noble principles of oneness of all religions and universal brotherhood of man till the end of his life. He refrained from eating flesh of any kind or onions or garlic. During the closing days of his life, he even gave up milk and honey and lived on simplest diet not infrequently comprising solely of a few cups of water. He died in 1438 A.C. at the age of sixty-one in the reign of Bud Shah. The Sultan paid him the highest tribute by accompanying his bier and by leading

the prayers himself for the everlasting peace and liberation of the Sheikh's soul. He was buried at the village Chrar which he had made as his headquarters during the major part of his life. Sheikh Nur-ud-Din was popular with all sects, classes and communities of people in the Valley. The Hindus believe that he was nominally a Mussalman and in reality a Sanyasi of a high order. They called him Sahazanand and had preserved his sayings in Kashmiri *Sharda* Script in the book entitled *Rishi Nama*. It was nearly two hundred years after the death of the saint that one of his followers, Baba Nasib-ud-Din Ghazi, wrote a biography of Sheikh Noor-ud-Din in Persian and rendered the sayings into the Persian Script which is known as *Noor Nama*.

The common people of the Valley remember the saint by the affectionate name of Nund Rishi and adore him equally with, and as high as, Lal Ded. He is by common consent accepted as the patron saint of the Valley. Thousands of people visit the sacred shrine of Nund Rishi at Chrar Shariff every year on the day of his death anniversary and pay their heart-felt homage to his greatness and glory. Three hundred and seventy years after the death of Nund Rishi in 1808 A.C., Ata Mohammed Khan, the Afghan Governor, when he raised the banner of revolt against the Kabul Government, struck coins in silver in the name of the saint on which were inscribed the words in Persian which rendered into English mean 'O Shah Nur-ud-Din' 'O Lord of the world,' on one side and 'The world is carrion and the seekers after it are dogs' on the other. "Thus Afghan Governor Ata Mohammed Khan gave, as it were, expression to public sentiment when coins were struck by him in the name of Sheikh Noor-ud-Din in 1808-10 A.C.", observes Sufi. "No other saint perhaps in human history has ever had coins struck in his honour".[1]

The basis of Nund Rishi's philosophy of life is love and intense devotion to God. He says :

"The love is he who burns with love
Whose self doth shine like gold

[1] *Kashir*, Vol. I, Page 101.

When man's heart lights up with the flame of love
Then shall he reach the Infinite."

Again :

"Love is death of an only son to a mother
Can the lover have any sleep ?
Love is venomous stings of a swarm of wasps
Can the lover have any rest ?
Love is a rope dripping with blood
Can the wearer even utter a sigh ?"

Like Lalla, Nund Rishi advises a seeker after truth not to be discouraged by adversity but carry on the struggle for the attainment of the objective of liberty :

"Shield not thy self against His arrows ;
Turn not thy face away from His sword.
Consider adversity as sweet as sugar ;
Therein lies thy honour in this world and the next."

Numerous legends and anecdotes have been associated with the life and doings of Nund Rishi which are as fresh today as ever in the memory of the people. To expose the hollowness of the cherished values of the society, the saint once went to attend a banquet, to which he had been invited, in rags. Because of his wretched appearance he could not get admittance into the assembly of the guests. He returned to his house and came back richly dressed. When the feast was served, he put his sleeves and the corners of his costly *choga* into the dishes. The guests were astonished at his strange behaviour and asked him the reason. He replied with a smile, "the feast is not really for Noor-ud-Din but for the costly and long sleeves." The host and all others were put to shame. The lesson of recognising merit in a man irrespective of his dress was brought home to every one present.

Sheikh Noor-ud-Din had a large number of followers at the time of his death. Of his chief disciples Baba Nasir-ud-Din was his favourite and all the saint's verses and sayings are addressed to him by the affectionate name of "Nasru". Reviewing his own life, Nund Rishi is reported to have told Baba Nasir-ud-Din :

"The body exposed to the cold river winds blowing,
Thin porridge and half-boiled vegetables to eat—
There was a day, O Nasru,

My spouse by my side and a warm blanket to cover us,
A sumptuous meal and a fish to eat
There was a day, O Nasru."

Soon after the death of Sheikh Noor-ud-Din his chief disciples founded a religious order known as Rishis or Babas in the Valley. While the Sayyids and other Muslim missionaries from Turkistan and Iran were engaged in preaching the doctrines of Quran in their orthodox form, the Rishis were absorbed in popularising the creed of Religious Humanism under the veneer of Islam. "These Muslim mystics, well-known as Rishis or Babas or hermits, considerably furthered the spread of Islam by their extreme piety and utter self-abnegation which influenced the people to a change of creed "[1] As the years rolled by the order of the Rishis grew in importance and exerted considerable influence on the social and cultural life of the people of the Valley. The Rishis did not enjoy any governmental support as certainly other Muslim missionaries did, but sheerly by their exemplary conduct, they led the masses to a higher and a nobler spiritual life. In his *Memoirs*, Jehangir wrote about the Rishis that "though they have no religious knowledge or learning of any sort, yet they possess simplicity and are without pretence. They abuse no one. They restrain the tongue of desire and the foot of seeking. They eat no flesh, they have no wives, and always plant fruit-bearing trees in fields so that men may benefit by them, themselves desiring no advantage. There are about 2,000 of these."

The peaceful and rapid conversion of the large masses of the people in Kashmir to Islam, which has been the source of wonder and astonishment for many students ot history and religion, was facilitated and made possible by the spread of the cult of Religious Humanism taught by Lal Ded, Nund Rishi and their followers. Islam as practised in the Valley, though it surely stands on the basis of the cardinal principles taught by the Quran, has been deeply influenced by the ancient Kashmir culture as it was influenced by the pre-Islamic Persian

[1] *Kashir*, Vol. I, Page 96.

culture after the followers of Zarathushtra accepted it in Iran. Even after their conversion to New Faith the people of the Valley have not altogether given up the ways of life and mental outlook that their forefathers had adopted after making innumerable experiments with diverse philosophies through thousands of years of their history. A Kashmiri Muslim shares in common with his Hindu compatriots many inhibitions, superstitions, idolatrous practices as well as social liberties and intellectual freedoms which are unknown to Islam. Of course Islam in its turn has also not left Hinduism unaffected in the Valley. Side by side with the work of the Rishis for the moral and spiritual upliftment of the Muslim masses, a movement of Reformation has been going on among the Hindus of Kashmir Great seers like Rupa Bhawani, Pandit Nand Ram alias Parmanand and others have flourished from time to time, who have expounded the message that Lal Ded gave. It is beyond the scope of the present work to discuss in detail the consequences of the impact of Islam on the civilisation and culture of Kashmir. But it might be noted that during the five centuries of Muslim rule, Hinduism in Kashmir underwent such transformation that it changed its complexion beyond recognition.

The conflict between reactionary Brahminism and orthodox Islam on the one side and the doubts of the progressive but critical Shaivites on the other, having been resolved by the evolution of Religious Humanism, the disintegration, anarchy and restlessness came to an end and Kashmir entered a new era of progress. The philosophy of life taught by Lal Ded and Nund Rishi was the basis on which the social and political life was reared during the medieval times in the Valley. The cardinal principles of this philosophy are attainment of complete freedom through discipline and self control, full faith in God, tolerance for other peoples' views, respect for all religions, right of every man and woman to live full natural life and affording refuge to the persecuted. This has been the precious heritage of all classes and communities of people in the Valley whether formally they adhere to Islam, Hinduism,

Buddhism or any other religion. Any activities which cut at the root of this culture have appeared abhorrent and intolerable to them. Whenever attempts have been made by any ruler of Kashmir or any minister, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, to suppress freedom of thought or to persecute any sect or class of people in the name of religion, Kashmiris have made a common cause and revolted against it. The history of Freedom Movement in the Valley is mainly the record of the fight of Kashmiris for the defence and preservation of this culture against the onslaughts of tyrants and despots who have appeared from time to time.

But the wise Muslim Kings became the standard-bearers of the Religious Humanism. They translated the basic principles of this philosophy into their actions while dealing with different sections of the people. "King Qutub-ud-Din saw that the people died of famine every year and he performed *Yajna* in the month of Bhadra and distributed large gifts." Bud Shah was a frequent visitor to the different Hindu *tirthas* throughout the Valley. Many interesting details of these pilgrimages have been recorded by the contemporary historians. "The king heard of the advantages of going on pilgrimage to *Naubandhna* hill from *Adipurana* and felt a desire to undertake a journey to the shrine", writes Srivara. "The king was bent on going to the pilgrimage and he went to Vijayeshwara in the year thirty-nine on the last day of the fortnight fixed for giving offerings to deceased ancestors.....The king accompanied by his two sons left Vijayesha and reached Durmarga on foot in three days. Wearing a noble appearance in his piety, he saw Vishnu's foot mark at the Krama lake and felt the joy of bowing at the feet of Vishnu..... From me he heard the songs of *Gita Govinda*..... When journeying to the Sukumara lake, the king drank of the water of that lake and meditated on the Sukumara shrine, and he felt a delight as if he had obtained the purity of his soul. The king heard the names of the holy places, touched the auspicious waters from the shrines, tasted the cool water, saw the beauty of the forest trees, and scented the perfumes of plants

and flowers, and thus performed the pilgrimage that gives pleasure to the five senses, and then returned to his capital".[1]

Under the influence of the cult of composite nationalism some of the festivals which had their origin in Hindu mythology had assumed a secular complexion and both Hindus and Muslims celebrated them. Bud Shah used to function as the high priest on such occasions. One such festival was the birthday of Vitasta. "On the thirteenth day of the moon the king wished to see the display of lamps made on the occasion of the worship held on account of the birth of Vitasta," writes Srivara, "and he embarked on a boat and went to the capital. While on the water he listened to well-composed songs, and at the time of embarking and disembarking he accepted the blessings of the citizens. The display of lamps offered by the citizens to the river looked graceful as if the spirits of numberless holy places had come to the Vitasta for adoration. The rows of lamps placed at the ferry on both banks looked beautiful, as if the gods had scattered golden flowers for the worship of the Vitasta. The moon was reflected on the river, but trembled on the water as if overcome by the superior beauty, and humbled by the lovely faces of the citizens' wives who came to make offerings to the Vitasta and to worship. The king who had curbed the pride of his enemies spent the whole night in the pleasure of listening to songs".[2]

Another such national festival was *Sont* (Basant) celebrated in the month of Chaitra (March-April). "At the Chaitra Festival, the king embarked on a boat, accompanied by his son and with a view to enjoy the sport of flowers he went to Madavarajya. The line of the King's boats on the Vitasta looked like the row of Indra's chariots on the milky way. He started from Avantipura, and stopped at royal palaces at Vijayesha and other places in order to witness dancing".[3] Describing the celebration of the same festival dur-

[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, Pp. 146-47.
[2] Ibid, Page 124.
[3] Ibid, Pp. 132-33.

ing the days of Chaks, the historian Shuka says: "When all the people had met at Sharikasthana and the king had arrived at the hill at that place, he held a great festival on the day appointed to celebrate the Season of Spring. The people besmeared themselves with saffron, aloes, camphor and sandal-wood paste on that day and looked beautiful. The king fixed a spot so high that it could not be easily seen, and then he gave elephant, horse and wealth to his servant who succeeded in shooting it".[1]

If the Chaitra festival was celebrated on the Hari Parbat hill, Kashmiris collected and enjoyed life on the hill of Jeshtharudra (now accupied by the royal palaces at Gupkar) on *Sri Panchmi* day. This is what eye witness Shuka says about it: "Again on the day of Sri Panchmi the king saw the people collect on hill of Jeshtharudra. Some held bouquets tastefully made of beautiful flowers to their noses, some were intoxicated and became uneasy when women, strangers to them, smiled; some drank wine and adorned their persons with flowers; thus all the people amused themselves on the Sri Panchmi day and then dispersed themselves. Many a time the king witnessed the dances of beautiful women, and looked at their youthful beauties and heard their songs, and gave them clothes of gold and of silver and then embarked on a new boat".[2]

It was by such acts of wise statesmanship and liberal-mindedness that the far-sighted Muslim monarchs stabilised their rule in the Valley. It restored order and peace and opened the way for progress and prosperity of the country.

The Muslim kings did not materially change the political structure of Kashmir. The administration remained as before in the hands of the traditional official class, the Brahmins, for whom the change in religion therefore offered very few prospects of advancement. Sanskrit continued to be, for a long time, the official and court language. Not only was this language used in writing official documents, reports and records, it continued to serve as the medium of communication for all

[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, Page 393.
[2] Ibid, Page 393.

classes of people. The Muslims even engraved inscriptions on their tombstones in Sanskrit and many old graves with inscriptions in *Sharda* script have been found in Srinagar, at Mattan and elsewhere.

But gradually the Sultans introduced the essential points of Islamic Law in the administration. They were however wise enough not to bring in anything which was repugnant to the basic principles of the indigenous culture. In the matter of personal laws, Hindus and Muslims were granted complete autonomy. When any Sultan, like Sikandar, attempted to foist the *Shariat* law on the people including the Hindus, the consequences were disastrous and the stability of the government was rudely shaken. Fortunately, however, such bigots were few and far between.

During the medieval times, Kashmir continued to be ruled by autocratic methods. The king was absolute and all laws and justice issued from his person. But the public opinion as represented by the nobles, the wealthy classes and the intellectuals exercised the age-old check on the behaviour of the rulers. The masses appeared nowhere in the picture excepting when they were used as cannon fodder by the ambitious nobles struggling for power.

Land was the main source of production as well as income to the State. The Valley was divided for the purposes of administration and revenue into a considerable number of smaller units known as *Vishaya* under Hindu rule and *Pargana* during the Muslim period. Sultan Shams-ud-Din fixed the revenue at one-sixth of the produce in 1341 A.C. and levied a tax of one-sixth on all imports into Kashmir. Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin Bud Shah revised the land assessment. He fixed it at one-fourth of the total produce in some places and at one-seventh at others. The enhanced rate was due to the extensive irrigation works which enormously increased the area of cultivation and made the people prosperous and rich. The paddy crop alone is said to have been no less than seventy-seven lakhs of *khirwars*. One of the main causes that contributed to the fifty-one days' rebellion at the advent of the Mughal rule

was the excessive enhancement of land revenue by the Mugh Governor. The cultivators were the chief supporters of th deposed Chak King. For that reason the first thing Akb did after the rebellion was quelled was to institute an enqui into the assessment of land revenue which was ordered to fixed according to facts. In the Mughal times, saffron a hunting became the monopolies of the Government.

The Kashmir army under the Muslim monarchs was div ded into infantry and cavalry. All classes of people a every district supplied the recruits. Some of the families no ably the Magres and the Chaks distinguished themselves b producing efficient and capable officers for the army. Th weapons in use throughout the medieval times were the swor bow and arrow, lance, spear, javelin and the iron-bound stic The warrior's armour included breast plates, shields, helme iron chests, protector for thighs,shanks,fore-arms, neck and othe parts of the body. In 1446 A.C. Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin impor ed fire-arms and an expert to teach their use to the army whic revolutionised the art of warfare.

Political stability and adequate defence forces under th Muslim rulers during the medieval times enabled the peopl to pursue the avocations of peace and cultural activities. Thin kers and authors reappeared and flourished. Some valuable works in Sanskrit were produced. With the advent of Muslim rule Persian, the language of Islamic culture under the Abba sids, was introduced in the Valley and soon became the rival o Sanskrit and finally overshadowed it by becoming the court language under the Mughals. Not only the Muslims but Hindus as well began to study Persian and in course of time the country produced many indigenous Persian scholars and writers.

Among the important Sanskrit works of this period men tion may be made of Jagadhar Bhat's *Stutikusumanjali* (1350 A.C.) a book which has been highly praised for its literary merit by competent authorities ; Sri Kantha's *Balbodhini* (1475 A.C.) Vallabhadev's *Padyavali* (1550 A.C.) and Shivopadhyay's *Vijnana Bhairava* (1775 A.C.) a brilliant book on *Shaivism.*

Most of the Sultans were patrons of learning. Besides encouraging the study of Sanskrit they opened schools and colleges for the spread of Arabic and Persian languages. Sultan Shahab-ud-Din established the first Madrasatul-Quran, a college for the study of Quran. Sultan Qutub-ud-Din laid the foundations of a residential system of education by establishing a college in Srinagar where arrangements were made for the lodging and boarding of the teachers as well as the taught and which provided for free association of the pupils and professors. When Sultan Sikandar Butshikan built the *Jama Masjid,* he attached a college for the study of Islamic literature to it. This was known as the College of *Jama Masjid.*

In the rule of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, the spirit of renaissance received the greatest impetus. The king established the *Dar-ul-Ulum* or the University near his own palace at Naushahar. It was accommodated in spacious buildings and flourished under the guidance of its eminent and learned rector Mulla Kabir Nahvi. He was assisted by a large number of scholars and men of science drawn from different parts of the world. The University was a residential one and perfect arrangements had been made for the lodging and boarding of the professors and the students. The revenue of several villages was assigned to meet the huge expenses of the University. This great and glorious institution genuinely represented the spirit of the age and the soul of the Kashmir culture. It imparted knowledge on religion, mathematics, astronomy, geography, history, medicine, art and architecture. A translation bureau was attached to the University where books from Sanskrit and Arabic were translated into Persian and Kashmiri. Mulla Ahmad, a Muslim savant, and Utta Som, a Kashmiri Pandit scholar, were in charge of the department. Zain-ul-Abidin sent his men to different parts of India, Persia and other Middle East countries to collect important books on all subjects, It is said he secured nearly twenty-five thousand volumes and with these he established a library for the University which remained in existence till the reign of Fath Shah. Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin gave liberal donations and grants for learning and spent huge sums for the

maintenance of various institutions. He opened a college i Zaingir between his palace and the royal garden. Another larg *madrassa* was established at Sir, a village near Mattan.

After Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, other Muslim kings notabl Hassan Shah and Hussain Shah Chak, also founded *khanqa* and *madrassas* in their times for diffusion of learning an dissemination of knowledge. Through the portals of these insti tutions came out renowned people, scholars, savants, author thinkers, philosophers and men of science who have mad great contributions to religion and philosophy, art and ar chitecture, learning and literature.

Books written in Persian as at present known and avail able are about 350 in number. They are on philosophy, re ligion, history, geography, medicine, music, painting and, o course, literature.

Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi (1512-94 A.C.) was not only considered the most learned of his contemporaries in the Valley but wa known as one of the greatest scholars of his age. He has written many books including *Tafsir-Masalak-ul-Akhyar, Wamiq-u Azra, Laila-Majnun, Maghazin-Nabi and Maqamat-i-Murshid* besides a *Divan, Qasidas* and *Ghazals*. Sarfi was a patriot and a fighter for freedom. Mention has already been made of a deputation which went to the court of Akbar and invited the Mughal Emperor to invade Kashmir and liberate the Valley from the tyranny of the Chaks. Sarfi was a member of this deputation.

In philosophy the names of Baba Daud Khaki, Khwaja Habib Ullah Navshahri and Mirza Akmal-ud-Din Kamil lead others. The prodigious work of the last named, *Bahar-ul-Urfan*, which was written in reply to that of Maulana Jalal-ud-Din Rumi, is in four volumes and comprises 80,000 verses. But the most distinguished thinker of the medieval times who personified the spirit of Kashmir culture in Persian literature was Mulla Mohammed Mahsin Fani who wrote the important book, *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*. Sufi rightly observes that Kashmir may well be proud of a scholar of his eminence. He was born in 1615 A.C. and belonged to a family which enjoyed a reputation for

culture and learning. He was a widely travelled man and had come in close contact with distinguished philosophers and religious leaders of his age. On his return from abroad, Fani took to a life of seclusion in a monastery where he worte the *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* in 1645 A.C. It consists of twelve parts dealing with the religions and views of (1) Parsis (2) Hindus including Sikhs (3) Qara Tibbatis (Buddhists) (4) Jews (5) Christians (6) Muslims (7) Sadiqis (adherents of Mussailima, a rival of Prophet Muhammed) (8) Wahidis (9) Raushanais (a religious sect founded by Mian Bayazid Ansari) (10) Illahis (followers of Din Illahi founded by Akbar) (11) Philosophers and (12) Sufis. *The Dabistan* was written by Fani in an unbiased and impartial manner appreciating the good points and critically commenting upon the unacceptable or objectionable features in all religions and philosophies of the contemporary world. He did not hesitate to express his preference and liking in certain respects for some other religions than Islam to which he belonged by birth. He declared that Din Illahi was the best of all and equally great or next to it was the religion of the Parsis, the Fire-Worshippers. The Ulemas or the Muslim divines of Kashmir denounced Fani for his heretic views and he was declared as *murtad* or an apostate. Although after his death attempts have been made to prove that subsequently Fani changed his views and died as a faithful Muslim, the fact is that he never repented for his 'sins' and was as independent, critical and sceptical in his opinions at the moment of his death as during the whole of his life. *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* has attracted the attention of many eminent scholars and students of philosophy and religion in the modern age. The book has been translated into many languages including French and English.

Another noted scholar of distinction was Khwaja Abdul Karim. By an accident, he, while on his way to Mecca, met Nadir Shah in Delhi who was struck by his intelligence and offered him employment. Subsequently he is said to have become the Shah's Foreign Minister and was once deputed as an envoy to Balakalva by the Persian King. After relinquishing his services at the Persian court, Abdul Karim travelled widely

over the Middle East and the Subcontinent of India. On his return to Kashmir he wrote a detailed description of his travels giving graphic and most interesting but accurate accounts of the places he had seen, the personages he met and the social and political conditions of the times in a book entitled *Bayad* or *Memoirs*. It is also called *Nadar Nama* or *Tarikh-i-Nadari*. This book besides being a history of Nadir Shah's rule after his sack of Delhi also serves as the chronicle of the later Mughals. Abdul Karim was a keen observer and an independent critic who wrote all that he saw in a beautiful, fascinating style.

Some biographies written in the medieval period are *Tazkara-i-Murshadin* by Khwaja Miram Bazaz (1575 A.C.), *Asrar-ul-Abrar* by Baba Daud Mushakani (1653 A.C.) and *Tazkara-i-Shaura-i-Kashmir* by Mulla Zihni (1655 A.C.).

The study of Persian language started in Kashmir immediately after the advent of Muslim rule. Slowly but firmly it struck roots in the soil of the Valley. Some of the Sultans, notably Zain-ul-Abidin, Haider Shah, Hussain Shah Chak were themselves poets and composed verses in Persian. But the best poetry was produced in the time of Mughals. Numerous poets have left their works. Among the outstanding whose names deserve mention are Ashraf, Tayib, Mazhari, Sarfi, Fani, Salim, Auji, Fitrati, Faroghi, Najmi, Guya, Taufiq, Sati, Yakta and Baha-ud-Din Mattu.

The greatest poet who composed in the Persian language during the medieval times was Mulla Mohammed Tahir Ghani who flourished in the reign of Aurangzeb. Although his sweet and exquisite poetry could be admired only by nobles and men of upper classes, he disliked to be in their company. Never in his life did Ghani write in praise of a prince, a governor or a noble ; nor did he wait upon them. In the whole history of Persian literature, probably he is alone in not having composed a *qasida* in praise of any human being. And the great poet composed no less than 20,000 verses. Ghani was an interesting personality. Like all great thinkers he voluntarily accepted a humble life and lived in a cottage with the barest necessities of life. He left the door and windows of the house wide open

when he was away and closed and locked them when inside. To those who enquired about the strange practice he would reply that the only wealth in the cottage was Ghani.

Being informed of the noble and brilliant poetry that Ghani composed, the Mughal Emperor instructed the Governor of Kashmir to present the poet at the Delhi court. But Ghani refused to go and advised the governor to tell the Emperor that the poet had turned lunatic. Naturally the governor turned down the suggestion and the poet was afraid that he might be forced to proceed to Delhi. While still in the presence of the governor, he jumped on his feet, tore the collar of the governor's shirt and went home. After three days of this incident the poet was no more in this world.

Mohammed Tahir Ghani possessed an extraordinary imagination and a very fertile brain. He composed verses which elicited the highest praise of the poets of Iran. Persian poetry found another home in the Valley during his time.

Many Pandits also wrote poetry in Persian when that language became the language of the rulers of the country. It is said that one Hindu named Tilak who had studied in Kashmir and knew Persian flourished at the court of Mahmud of Ghazni as an interpreter. That was very early in history. In later centuries many Pandits composed verses in Persian. Mention may be made of Taba Ram Turki Betab (1840 A.C.) whose *Jung Nama* stands at par with *Shah Nama* of Firdausi; Pandit Raj Kaul Arzbegi Dairi (1887 A.C.), Munshi Bhavani Das Kachru Nikku whose original style of the *Bahar-i-Tavil* is held in high esteem and Pandit Raj Kak Dar 'Farrukh'. "What Musalman can beat Rai Khwaja Pandit Chandra Bhan Brahmin who flourished under Shah Jahan, Aurangzeb Alamgir and Dara Shukuh?", asks Sufi. Paying a tribute to the love of learning among the Pandit community the learned author of *Kashir* adds: "The Kashmir Brahmin distinguished himself in Sanskrit and won the proud title of Pandit in the early history of India. He made a name in Persian in medieval India. He is not behind others in English in modern India. He has thus won laurels in all the three allied Aryan languages of the

world at different times in the cultural development of India".[1]

During the ancient Hindu and Buddhist periods as well as the early Shah Miri Sultans, Sanskrit was the court language and medium of communication among the educated classes. Later on in the medieval times Persian took its place. But the masses neither spoke Sanskrit nor Persian. Their language was *Prakrit*, a conglomeration of the words of many languages which gradually took the shape of Kashmiri, the language of the people now. The sayings of Lal Ded and Nund Rishi became very popular among the masses of the Valley because they are all in the Kashmiri and are believed to be the oldest books in that language. Some authorities however believe that Rajanak Shiti Kanth wrote his *Mahanaya Prakash*, a book on Shaiva philosophy, even earlier in the thirteenth century. Som Bhat wrote *Zaina Charita*, a biography of King Bud Shah, in prose. Another courtier Udh Bhat brought out *Zaina Vilas*, a dramatic work dealing with an episode in the king's life.

The women of Kashmir did not enjoy that much of liberty under the Muslim rule as they had during the early period of their history. Those belonging to the middle and upper classes were mostly kept in seclusion and had to move about in veil. Yet it is interesting to note that many women took active part in public life and attained name and fame in history. We have already mentioned Lalla, the hermitess, and Rupa Bhavani who flourished about the end of the sixteenth century. Both of them were religious-minded and saintly in character. To a different type belonged Habba Khatun, a peasant girl of village Chanda Har whose original name was Zoon. She was very handsome and lived to be the queen of King Usuf Shah Chak (1579-86 A.C.). She was a musician of a high order and is famous for having invented the *Rast Kashmiri Rag*. When Usuf Shah was deposed and sent to a province outside Kashmir, her condition became miserable. She then lived like a recluse and during the days of plight and separation, she composed songs that are full of love, pathos and emotion. Another musician and singer of note be-

[1] *Kashir*, Vol. II, Page 487.

longing to the fair sex is Arni Mal, wife of the poet Bhavani Das Kachru, whose lyrics are still sung in the Kashmiri homes. Her fate appears not to be disimilar to that of Habba Khatun.

Other women of note during the medieval times were Bibi Taj Khatun, daughter of Commander-in-Chief of Sultan Shahab-ud-Din's army, a lady of saintly character ; Bibi Bahat, a disciple of Nund Rishi and renowned for her learning ; Lachhma Khatun, wife of a minister of Bud Shah, who founded a *khanqah* and a *madrassa* near the *Jama Masjid* ; Gul Khatun, the queen of Haider Shah, who favoured the customs of Hindus ; Bibi Saliha who rebuilt *Khanqah-i-Maulla* by selling her jewelry after it had been demolished by the Shias ; Hafiza Khadiji who opened a school for women and Begum Farzana, a lady of extraordinary ability, courage and charm who became Christian, married Walter Reinhardt, a British soldier, in 1773 A.C., whom the Mughal Emperor granted Sardana as a *jagir*. The last named is known to History as Begum Samru and is now a saint of the Roman Catholic Church as a reward for her pious deeds.

With the decline of the Hindu rule the architecture in Kashmir had lost much of its impressive grandeur, vitality and strength. The columns, the trefoil arch, the pillars, all degenerated into mere ornamental motifs. The dimensions of the temples and other public edifices also were reduced to ridiculous proportions so that ultimately they became small miniatures unfit for use. During the days of glory, every architectural feature of the religious buildings was designed for utility purposes. But when the Hindu rule declined, pillars and arches were converted into ornaments and decorations yielding place to sculptured reliefs, geometrical figures and floral patetrns. On the whole a gradual decline, lack of originality and tendency of repetition are obvious in the works of the Hindu architects of the 10-12th centuries.

The stabilisation of the government under the Muslim kings restored the peace in the Valley and with it not only learning of science and arts was revived but attempts were made at invention, evolution and perfection of new styles in architecture. Naturally in the beginning, Kashmiri architects and master-buil-

ders revived the old traditions and patterns which prevailed during the Hindu period. But in this they did not prove a success. "Muslim architecture in Kashmir must be pronounced as rather disappointing in comparison with the grand edifices of Hindu rule like the temples at Martand, Avantipura, Parihaspura, Pattan and Tapar etc".[1] The Muslims tried the masonry style of which two most outstanding examples are the tomb of Zain-ul-Abidin's mother, popularly known as Bud Shah's temple, and the small tomb of Sayyid Mohammed Madani, an envoy at the court of Zain-ul-Abidin, outside Sangin Darwaza in Srinagar which was built in 1444 A.C. It is a typical example of the Hindu Muslim composite culture peculiar to the Kashmir architectural style. "The tile work is very valuable—one of the most valuable antiquities which Kashmir possesses", wrote Sir John Marshall. "There are only three monuments that I know of in India where such tiles can be found".

The structure of the tomb of Bud Shah's mother was raised by Sikandar on the plinth of a five-faced Hindu temple which the *But Shikan* had demolished. It has a central dome which is surrounded by four copulas. It is wholly on the Persian model with its masonry and glazed and moulded blue bricks which are studded at intervals in the exterior walls. The plinth with its filetted torus cornice is essentially Hindu in conception and origin and so is the trefoiled entrance and its massive side pieces. There are a few carved stones still lying near the site bearing sculpture reliefs of Hindu deities.

Having failed to erect the massive structures in the traditional Hindu style, the Muslims invented a wooden style of their own. Probably they were forced to do so because of the religious needs. The temple was meant for the deity and the individual but the mosque was needed for the communal worship. It was to be spacious if not massive. Buildings of stone are cold but those of wood are warm and comfortable inside and therefore more fit for the purposes of communal worship. Wood was available in abundance throughout the

[1] *Kashir*, Vol. II, Page 505.

Valley and therefore just as the indigenous talent was intelligently applied in utilising the locally available material for building temples in the Gandhara style in the earlier periods, so the Kashmir architects now made the use of wood in erecting mosques, *khanqahs* and other edifices. This original style was evolved during the reign of Zain-ul-Abidin who was the greatest patron of art and architecture. Some of the best designers and architects were invited from abroad, who, in collaboration with the Kashmiri craftsmen and master-builders, raised magnificent structures like the mosque at Shah Hamadan, the mosque of Madyan Sahib, the *Jama Masjid*, the tomb of Sheikh Nur-ud-Din at Chrar and the Jama Masjid at Shopian. In all these buildings the saracenic influence is quite clear in their details but they are unlike the Muslim edifices of other countries. Outwardly the *Khanqah* of Shah Hamdan looks like a Buddhist Pagoda and the arches, trefoils, cloisters and blustrades in *Jama Masjid* are very similar to Hindu temples. In *Jama Masjid* "the well finished timber work of the walls with its pleasing diaper of headers and stretchers, the magnificent pillars of deodar in the larger halls, and the delicate open work traceries of window screens and blustrades, skilfully put together out of innumerable small pieces of wood, all help to enhance the charm and accentuate the stylishness of this architecture", writes Sir John Marshall. As a matter of fact this early architecture of the Muslim period testifies to the revival of strength, virility and force in the wooden style.

But the best specimens of the wooden style of architecture were the royal palaces that Zain-ul-Abidin had built. One of these was in the middle of the Volur lake. He had emptied a big quantity of stones into the lake and on those constructed an island measuring two hundred square yards. Here he erected a charming palace and planted pleasant groves of trees. In his city of Nau Shahr he built *Rajdhan* (the seat of the Government). It was also called Zaina Dab after the King's own name. The edifice was twelve storeys high some of which contained fifty rooms, halls and corridors. The whole of this lofty structure was made of wood. "It was here that the king, now that his foes

had been vanquished, enjoyed, like Indra, the pleasant songs of the singers all day long", writes Srivara, "Within the palace was the audience hall, adorned with the three cornered throne and wide spacious halls lined with glass; and here were many columns of victory in the palace, and here the breezes blew pleasantly in the morning." Zain-ul-Abidin built another three storeyed house on the small island in the Dal lake called Suna Lank.

With the advent of the Mughal rule in the Valley, the style of architecture underwent another alteration. No more did the wooden structures remain in vogue. The Mughal Emperors mostly distinguished themselves by planning and constructing beautiful and lovely gardens which added to the scenic charm of the Valley and made it the most attractive spot in the world. Almost all these gardens are built in beautiful surroundings on the hillsides where water is available in abundance to feed the waterfalls and the fountains. The most famous of the Mughal gardens are the Shalimar garden which was built by Jahangir in 1620 A.C., the Nishat garden built by Asaf Khan, brother of Nur Jahan, in 1634 A.C., the Chashma-i-Shahi garden laid out by Shah Jahan in 1632 A.C., the Achhabal garden built by Jahan Ara, daughcer of Shah Jahan in 1640 A,C., the Nasim Bagh and the Verinag spring with its garden. In these gardens side canals start from the main stream and culminate in the *baradaris* which are built on the gateways. "The system of water-irrigation and the tank construction, the key-note of the Persian gardening traditions, was followed by the Mughals in almost all their gardens in Kashmir and the rest of India", writes Kaumadi."But they harmoniously combined this central feature of the Persian proto-type with the artistically laid out plans of the flower beds and trees, popular among the Hindus and the Buddhists."[1]

But the Mughals did not confine their work of construction to planting of pleasure gardens. They erected other public buildings and mosques as well. The style of all these is practically the same as that of the buildings in Delhi and other towns

[1] *Kashmir, its cultural heritage* by Kaumadi, Page 175.

in India built by them. Only in place of marble which was not locally available in Kashmir and difficult to transport from India, they have used polished stones and bricks. The earliest Mughal building in Srinagar is the high and impressive wall around Hari Parbat hill which was built by Akbar in 1596 A.C. The Pathar Masjid built entirely of stone, in contradistinction to the indigenous wooden structures, was built by Noor Jahan in 1622 A.C.; the mosque of Akhund Mulla Shah was erected a little later. In the opinion of Nicholls, these constructions are unsurpassed in purity of style and perfection of detail by any Mughal buildings in Delhi or Agra. A notable building is Pari Mahal (Fairy Palace) now in ruins on the spur of the Zebarwan mountain which commands an enchanting view of the Dul lake and its romantic surroundings. It is also called Quntilun. It was built by Dara Shikoh to house a School of Astronomy and is therefore a monument to the love of letters and learning that the Mughals cherished. The Pari Mahal has six terraces and its ruins are a standing witness to the lovely and useful building that it once must have been.

The Mughals also built many rest houses and *sarais* on the imperial route from the Punjab to Kashmir for the convenience of travellers and distinguished visitors to the Valley. They are simple structures comprising of two square courts placed side by side.

The building of bridges across the Vitasta had been started early in Kashmir history. As has already been stated, the first bridge was erected by Parvarsen II in the sixth century A.C. Other Hindu Kings also built bridges and it is said that the present seven bridges were found by Muslims already in existence across the river in some form. But the stone architecture was not suited to build permanent bridges. The wooden architecture of the Muslims made that possible and Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin invented cantilever bridges by building the Zaina Kadal. Other Muslim kings followed him by erecting other bridges across Vitasta in Srinagar, on the same model.

The Sultans of Kashmir as well as the Mughal Emperors were the lovers of fine arts and encouraged music, dancing

and painting. Bud Shah was the greatest patron of the arts in peace. His love for music and dancing was immense. In his time there was a great influx of expert musicians and dancers both men and women. Srivara the historian himself was a musician and a connoisseur of this art. The chronicles recorded by him are throughout interspersed with accounts of the renowned musicians and dancers at the courts of Shah Miri Sultans and what deep interest the kings took in singing and dancing. Describing one such assembly in Bud Shah's time, Srivara says: "The spectators and the singers knew literature, rhetoric and philosophy and appreciated merit. Young women proficient in music possessed of sweet voice and with a genuine ardour for song graced the palace. The men were learned and dignified and fond of enjoyment and they displayed their taste and their intelligence on stage. The renowned Tara and the actors sang various songs to the *Naracha* tune and to every kind of music. And the songstress Utsava who was even like cupid's arrow, charming to the eye, and proficient in dance, both swift and slow, entranced everyone. The actresses who displayed the forty-nine different emotions seemed like the ascending and descending notes of music personified."[1] Uttha Soma, a poet, who flourished at the court of Bud Shah wrote a book named *Manaka* on music and dedicated it to the Sultan.

Sultan Haider Shah was so skilled in playing on the lute that he gave lessons even to the professors on the subject. The popularity of music reached such heights in the time of Sultan Hussain Shah that as many as twelve hundred musicians from India were employed at his court. A separate department was established for the purpose and Srivara was appointed as its head. The king was well versed in Sanskrit and could chant verses in that language quite melodiously but he preferred to hear Kashmiri songs and was never so happy as when singing them. "The female dancers of the king shone beauteously and bright like the lamps at night", says Srivara. "They were inflamed by the god of love and were young and full of emotions. The female dancers Ratnamala, Dipmala and Nripmala danced

[1] *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, Pp. 133-36.

charmingly displaying emotions and gestures."[1] Pavarakdana was celebrated for his song, poetry and music on whom Hussain Shah showered gold in recognition of merit. Mirza Haider Dughlat was so much interested in music that at occasions he forgot the work of the State. In his time there were many people who were skilled in the art and their lutes, dulcimers, harps, drums and flutes were well known. Usuf Shah Chak, the unfortunate lover of the celebrated Habba Khatun, was a great lover of music. As a matter of fact it was the song of Habba that attracted him to her. It is said that he was so proficient in this art that he once even corrected Tan Sain, the famous musician at Akbar's court, and that great singer duly acknowledged the correction.

Many painters flourished during the medieval times. One of them was Mulla Jamil who adorned the court of Bud Shah and was pre-eminent among the contemporary painters. The celebrated group of painters at the court of Akbar included five painters from Kashmir according to Percy Brown, the author of *Indian Painting under the Mughals.* In the Indian section of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, there are twenty-four large paintings on cotton which were produced in Kashmir four centuries ago. The subjects dealt with in these paintings are scenes of battles and bloodshed. The scenic beauties of the Kashmir mountains are depicted in all of them. Probably these paintings were executed during the days when Mirza Haider Dughlat was at the helm of affairs in the Valley.

Most of the several arts and crafts that are flourishing now in the Valley owe their origin to the Muslim Kings particularly Zain-ul-Abidin. It was Bud Shah who introduced the use of paper in place of *Bhoj Patr* (birch bark) for writing purposes. And he taught the local people how the paper could be manufactured. This gave an impetus to learning and production of literature. Other crafts that were introduced by the Great King were stone-polishing, stone-cutting, gold-beating etc. The manufacture of shawl was

[2] Ibid, Page 136.

known in the early ages, but it was Sultan Qutub-ud-Din who patronised, nourished and stimulated the industry. The feature of red and green spots in regular rows in the texture of shawls is the invention of one Naghaz Beg who lived in the middle of the sixteenth century while the floral designs were introduced in the reign of the Mughal Emperor, Mohammed Shah.

The embroidery, *gabba*-manufacture, silk-rearing, book-binding, papier-mache, silver and copper works, wood-carving, leather-tanning and many other crafts which have made the Kashmir artisanship famous all over the globe in modern times, had their small beginnings in the middle ages under the Muslim monarchs.

CHAPTER FIVE

DARK YEARS OF TYRANNY

AT the decline and disruption of the Mughal Empire the governors in Kashmir had become irresponsible and cruel forcing the nobles, the traditional political leaders of the masses, to approach the rising Afghan power in the north-west and to seek its help for the liberation of the Valley from the clutches of the Mughal tyrants. For thousands of years the two peoples of Kashmir and Gandhara (modern N. W. F. Province and East Afghanistan) had been culturally and politically allied, treating each other as friends and equals in days of weal and woe. It was not therefore anything surprising or unprecedented that the Kashmir nobles sought assistance of Ahmad Shah Durrani in this misfortune in the hope that the Afghans would prove the friends of Kashmir people in the days of their need. But no sooner was the Valley annexed by Durrani to his Afghan kingdom than the Kashmiris found they were thrown from the frying pan into the fire. The very first Afghan Governor, Abdullah Khan Ishaq Aqasi, who ruled theValley for only six months proved to be a ferocious bigot, a tyrant and a barbarian. He dealt very harshly with the people and extorted money from them by all conceivable methods. The people had already been impoverished by the Mughal governors and were famished. But Aqasi was determined to amass wealth by hook or by crook. On his return to Kabul, he presented one crore of rupees to the king. This was besides the fortune that he had made for himself. Aqasi brought the business and trade of Kashmir to a standstill. All the big merchants of the Valley left the country which was ruined economically.

The Afghans could not stabilise the Government in their own native land nor rule in peace. Ahmad Shah Durrani was throughout his life involved in wars with India. So were his descendants who also fought among themselves for the crown

and treated each other savagely by applying lancet to the ey of the fallen prince. In these circumstances most of their gov nors in Kashmir were tempted to revolt against the imper authority at Kabul and declare their independence. This caus repeated conflict between the Afghan kings and their satra with the result that the peaceful Kashmiris were ruined an reduced to a very miserable plight.

Most of the Afghan governors were uncultured and inc rigible fanatics. They imposed severe restrictions on the re gious observances and rituals of the Hindus. Many templ were desecrated and the idols broken. The governors forbad the wearing of sacred thread by the Pandits and disallowed te ching of Sanskrit or performance of Hindu mode of worshi During the greater part of the Afghan rule it became difficul for Hindu women and indeed for Kashmiri women in genera to move about freely because an Afghan, if he so willed, cou lay hands upon any beautiful damsel and put her in his *harem*. Many Kashmiris, both male and female, were captured, mad slaves and sent as presents to their masters, friends or kinsme at Kabul by the Afghan rulers. Never before had the peopl in the Valley experienced a barbarous method of administratio as they did during the period of Afghan rule. A Persian pro verb on the lips of the Kashmiris throughout the period sai that cutting off a head was like plucking a flower to thes stone-hearted men.

Abdullah Khan Ishaq Aqasi was strangely enough succee ded by a Hindu, Sukh Jiwan Mal. He had been nominated by Aqasi himself to rule temporarily when the latter was called t Kabul. But Sukh Jiwan proved to be a clever fellow. His chie adviser was a capable Kashmir Muslim, Abdul Hassan Bande. Both together tried to improve the lot of the people and were to a certain extent successful in their endeavours. But the regime proved short-lived. The Afghan rulers were pre-occupied with their campaigns against India and Iran. They needed money and demanded it from Sukh Jiwan. It was impossible for him to extort a huge sum from the people of the Valley. He therefore refused to pay and what was more, when pestered with

the demand, asserted his independence with the advice of his Councillor Bande. The pro-Afghan faction in Kashmir opposed him but was vanquished in a battle at Baramulla.

Things went on merrily for a few years but unfortunately differences arose between Sukh Jiwan and Bande which resulted in the dismissal of the latter and appointment of his rival Mir Muqim in his place. After this, Sukh Jiwan is reported to have become harsh towards Muslims. Now the Afghans in alliance with Raja Ranjit Dev of Jammu attacked Kashmir, faced Sukh Jiwan and defeated him. He was captured, blinded and sent to Lahore in chains where Ahmad Shah Durrani caused him to be trampled to death.

But the re-assertion of Ahmad Shah Durrani as Emperor did not in any way better the lot of Kashmir. Governors followed in quick succession, but it became difficult for any one of them to wield his authority successfully because of factional feuds. As a matter of fact, some of them had to wage battles against their predecessors or other aspirants for power to reach the capital. And when finally they succeeded in doing so they only began their careers of oppression and terrorism. Virtually there ensued anarchy in the land and adventurers and unscrupulous power hunters were on the lookout to become governors. In the time of Governor Khurrum Khan one such opportunist, Amir Mohammed Khan Jawan Sher Qazilbash, Commander-in-Chief of the Afghan forces in the Valley, drove out the former and installed himself as the ruler of the country. He built the fort at Shergarhi and constructed the Amira Kadal bridge. Meanwhile Ahmad Shah died on the 13th April 1772 A.C. Taking advantage of the opportunity, Jawan Sher set himself up as an independent ruler and remained in power for six years.

Jawan Sher was a Shia by faith and by his ill-conceived policy revived the Shia-Sunni controversy. "He was cruel both to Hindus and Muslims", says Sufi. "His rule became notorious for oppression and high-handedness."

When Timur Shah the successor of Ahmad Shah Durrani established himself on the throne at Kabul, he deputed Haji Karimdad Khan as Governor of Kashmir. The governor-desig-

nate came with a strong force, defeated Jawan Sher and sent him in chains to Kabul. George Forester who visited the Valley in 1783 A.C., says: "The force sent against him (Jawan Sher) was small and ill-equipped and might have been easily repelled by a few resolute men stationed in the passes. But Kashmiris reconciled their conduct to the Persian by urging that if he had remained in Kashmir he would have converted them all to the faith of Ali and cut them off from hope of salvation."[1] Haji Karimdad conquered Skardu and vanquished Ranjit Dev, Raja of Jammu, who attempted to annex the Valley. But, true to the Afghan tradition, Karimdad Khan excelled his predecessors in oppression and cruelty. "Haji Karimdad was rather heartless and killed alike Hindus and Muslims on provocation. His exactions through Aslam Harkara, his unscrupulous tax-collector, exceeded even those of the notorious Itiqad Khan, the Mughal *Subedar*, and compelled many to leave the country. *Zar-i-Nyaz* a tax on *mansabdars* and *jagirdars* was exacted from officials and landlords; *Zar-i-Ashkhas*, another tax, from merchants and bankers, *Zar-i-Hubub*, a tax on grain from farmers. Certain Pandits who were concerned in a conspiracy with the Bambas against Karimdad were exposed to suffocation by smoke. For liberating them Karimdad realised a large indemnity called *Zar-i-dud*".[2] He also levied an anna per rupee on the price of shawls from the weavers.

Karimdad was very cruel towards Shias and heartlessly destroyed Amirabad a town which Jawan Sher had founded for the Shia community.

At Karimdad's death his son Azad Khan became the governor. For his ferociousness and bad temper this man is known as Nadir Shah of Kashmir. Like many of his predecessors he also declared his independence but was forced to pay three lakhs of rupees by Timur Shah, the Afghan King, as a tribute which, of course, Azad extorted from his wretched subjects. During Azad's rule Kashmir suffered frightfully from a devastating famine when even salt was sold at rupees four a *seer*.

[1] *Journey*, by George Forester, Pp. 15-16.
[2] *Kashir*, Vol. I, Page 316.

Again governors were deputed in quick succession from Kabul. One of them Mir Hazar Khan declared his independence and dealt blows at the poor Shias and the Hindus by imposing special new taxes on them.

In 1795 A.C. Abdullah Khan Halokozai became the governor and ruled for eleven years. Meanwhile Nand Ram Tikku a remarkable Kashmiri Pandit rose to be a minister at the Afghan court where he wielded immense power and prestige. His protege Har Das was the *diwan* of Abdullah Khan. In 1800 A.C. differences arose between the governor and his *diwan* resulting in the recall of the former and his imprisonment in Bala Hissar fort. But at this time a tussle broke out for the throne of Kabul. One after the other Zaman Shah and Mohammed Shah were deposed and Shuja-ul-Mulk established himself as the King. Such unsettled times offered an opportunity to Abdullah Khan to escape from his imprisonment and return to Kashmir where he installed himself as an independent ruler. The Afghans attacked the Valley in 1807 A.C. and while a siege of the fort at Biru was on, Abdullah Khan died.

Ata Mohammed Khan was now nominated to be the next governor. Soon after his installation the seat of power at Kabul was again involved in strife. Shah Shuja was ousted by Mohammed Shah and turned out of the country. Ata Mohammed set himself as an independent ruler and tried to be benevolent and just. He strengthened the defences of the country by constructing a number of small forts at Sopore, Baramulla and on the summit of the Hari Parbat hillock. He revived trade and gave an impetus to commerce. As a mark of respect for the public opinion and national sentiment of the Kashmiris, he struck coins in the name of Nund Rishi, the patron saint of the Valley. Through the assistance of Nand Ram Tikku, Ata Mohammed coaxed Shah Shuja, the banished Afghan King, to come to Kashmir where he was lodged in the fort of Hari Parbat. But this proved a source of trouble as Mohammed Shah the Afghan monarch, took offence at it and in alliance with Ranjit Singh, Maharaja of the Punjab, attacked Kashmir in 1813 A.C. The alliance was fraudulent as both the

Afghans and the Sikhs wanted to capture Kashmir but the former forestalled the latter by entering the Valley first and after defeating Ata Mohammed installed Sardar Mohammed Azim Khan as their own governor at Srinagar.

In 1814 A.C. Ranjit Singh invaded Kashmir under the pretext that he had been promised eight lakhs of rupees by the Afghans for the previous year's campaign but the amount was not paid in full. The Maharaja himself remained at Poonch and the Sikh armies attacked the Valley from two sides through Tosha Maidan and Hurpur. The soldiers came by unfrequented paths and in the beginning appeared successful. But the heavy rain and intense cold retarded the progress of the invading armies. On receiving an unfounded information that his armies at Hurpur near Shopian had been routed, Ranjit Singh hastily retreated to Bhimber pursued by a commander of the Afghan forces. The remnants of the Sikh armies were unnerved and took to flight.

Azim Khan had been hateful for his acts of cruelty from the very start of his career. Flushed with this victory, he became more ruthless and tyrannical. There is no proof that any of the Kashmir nobles had yet sought any outside help to overthrow the Afghan rule. But Azim was suspicious because of his own misdeeds and evil intentions. He called to account those leading Pandits whom he considered responsible for inducing Ranjit Singh to undertake the invasion of Kashmir. Many Muslims also suffered with the Pandits, says Sufi, for their complicity, both losing their estates. Azim Khan also discharged all the Kashmiri soldiers from the Army because he distrusted their loyalty.

Realising that the freedom of their country had once again come under a heavy shadow, the nobles of the Valley saw no alternative but to resort to the time-honoured practice of approaching some powerful neighbour. Towards whom could they turn but the redoubtable Ranjit Singh ? In 1818-19 A.C. Birbal Dar, a Pandit *Jagirdar*, left the Valley stealthily and went straight to the court of the Sikh potentate at Lahore. Birbal's flight in mid-winter across the snow-

covered mountains at Pir Panchal was made possible by the support which was willingly offered by Malik Kamdar and Malik Namdar, two Muslim landlords, as well as by large numbers of Muslim peasants in the Kulgam *pargana*. The wounds of the crushing defeat sustained by him in 1814 A.C. were still fresh in Ranjit Singh's memory. Therefore he hesitated to try his luck once again. While he was still wavering in his decision, Azim Khan was recalled to Kabul at this critical time, who left his own brother Jabbar Khan behind in charge of the affairs in the Valley. This change encouraged Birbal to urge the Sikh Maharaja to make the fateful attempt. The Kashmir noble held himself responsible for all the consequent loss in case of defeat. As a guarantee he surrendered his own son Raj Kak Dar as a hostage till the termination of the military campaign.

Jabbar Khan proved to be the last and the most contemptible Afghan governor. His brief rule was characterised by policy of senseless cruelty which made Kashmiris desperate and determined to end the Afghan rule. Therefore this time it proved virtually a walk-over for Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He came, he saw and he conquered. Lahore was illuminated for three days in honour of the victory. "The stupidity of the Afghan, his greed and his exactions are responsible for this loss to him", says Sufi. "His intolerance and extortion are still on the lips of those whose ancestors suffered at his hands".

But the change of masters, again, to the great distress of the victimised people, proved but a change of king log for king stork. The Sikhs were no less cruel, rapacious, short-sighted, intolerant and fanatical than the Afghans. "The Sikhs looked upon Kashmiris as little better than cattle", wrote William Moorcroft, who visited Kashmir in 1824 A.C. with the permission of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. "The murder of a native by a Sikh was punished with a fine to the government of from sixteen to twenty rupees of which four were paid to the family of the deceased if a Hindu, and two if he was a Mohammedan". Moorcroft found that everywhere the people were in a most

abject condition "subjected to every kind of extortion a oppression."

Under Sikh supremacy Kashmir was ruled by ten gove nors. It is interesting that out of these, five were Hindus, thr Sikhs and two Muslims. The first governor was Misr Diwa Chand who remained in charge only for about a year. He w succeeded by Diwan Moti Ram for a short while but w recalled and replaced by Hari Singh Nalwa. The latter howev proved oppressive and hateful and Moti Ram was deput again. It was in Moti Ram's second tenure of office that Willia Moorcroft visited the Valley.

In the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, as to considerable extent even today, religion played the most effe tive part in the administration of the country. If Afghans we less tyrannical towards the Muslim nobles the Sikh governo treated the Hindu *jagirdars* and landlords less harshly. O course the poor sections of all communities, the masses, suffer equally. Naturally just as it fell to the lot of Pandit nobles t lead the struggle for the freedom of the country during th time of the Afghans the fight was now taken up by th Muslim gentry. They would gather in the mosques and oth religious shrines to conspire for the overthrow of the Sik and to achieve independence. Diwan Moti Ram therefore clos *Jama Masjid* so that Muslims may not be able to assemble i large numbers. He planned to demolish Khanqah-i-Maul and as a matter of fact installed guns on the opposite *ghat* the Vitasta for the purpose. But the Hindus no less than th Muslims opposed this measure which was in flagrant violati of the noble principles of the Kashmir culture. "It is to t lasting credit of Pandit Birbal Dar that, when a deputation Muslims headed by Hassan Shah Qadiri Khanayari approache him, he dissuaded the Sikhs from the destruction of th *Khanqah*", writes Sufi. "He moved in the matter, used hi influence and saved this historic structure from vandalism".[1]

Diwan Moti Ram forbade cow-slaughter and declared i to be a crime punishable with death. Some Muslims accuse

[1] *Kashir*, Vol. II, Page 726.

of it were actually hanged and dragged through the streets. One whole family suspected of the crime was even burnt alive in their house by the police.

Moti Ram's successor Diwan Chuni Lal proved no better. But he was followed by Diwan Kripa Ram a romantic person of whom the traveller Vigne records that he was the kindest and best of all Sikh governors. He was a lover of luxury without being tyrannical. The companionship of dancing girls was his rage and even his boats were paddled by women whose hands and feet were adorned with tiny bells to produce attractive sounds while the boat moved on. For this reason the governor was called "Kripa Shroyn". The merry-making days of Jahangir were revived in the Valley in his time. But Kripa Ram's revelry was disliked by the Lahore Court. He was recalled, humiliated and dismissed.

During the rule of the next governor, Bhima Singh Ardali, there was a Shia-Sunni trouble when Hassanabad and Zadibal, the two densely inhabited localities of Shias, were burnt.

Prince Sher Singh, the son of Ranjit Singh, governed the Valley for two years from 1832-34 A.C. He abandoned himself to enjoyment and handed over the country to the tender mercies of his *Naib* Basakha Singh with the inevitable results. A terrible famine broke out which reduced the population of the country from 800,000 to 200,000.

Then came Colonel Mehan Singh Kumedan who ruled Kashmir from 1834-41 A.C. "Mehan Singh was unusually brave having had twenty-seven wounds on his body. He was also a man of his word. There are several stories of his sense of justice. He endeavoured to revive the trade, industry and agriculture of the Valley..... He did his best, in the beginning, to mitigate the ravages of famine and with a view to stimulating population, remitted the tax upon marriages and set to work to bring some order into the administration".[1] Mehan Singh was the only Sikh Governor who firmly put the Sikh soldiers under check so that they do not exercise oppression and create havoc

[1] *Kashir*, Vol. II, Page 739.

as they were wont to do. For this he paid with his life. T soldiers mutinied and assassinated him on the night of 1 April 1841 A.C.

Meanwhile Maharaja Ranjit Singh had died in 1839 A and a shameful struggle for power, an internecine feud was progress at Lahore. The last two governors under Sikhs w Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din and his son Sheikh Imam-ud-D who were mild though weak. But it was not in their power effect any drastic change in the policy of the Sikh admin tration. They were helpless before the Sikh soldiery and h to cater to the wishes of the faction at the Lahore Court wh was responsible for their appointment. Kashmir was ag in confusion and passing through a period of gloom. Not on did oppression prevail in their time but people were heav taxed and money was extorted from them in every possib manner. The officials were extremely corrupt and life an property of the citizens were always in danger. The gover ment appropriated a large portion of the produce of the so and almost the whole of the remaining was taken away by co rupt officials. People were reduced to abject poverty and th cultivator would not voluntarily till the land. Forced labo was revived with renewed vigour, if not introduced for th first time, and people were made to work against their wi The country was seething with discontent and to keep th people under control a new class of landlords was created an *jagirs* were granted to them. At the advent of the Dogra Rul it was found that no less than 3115 *jagirs* had thus bee granted.

By the end of the Sikh Rule the people were thoroughl demoralised. They had become known as *zulum parast*, (th worshippers of tyranny). All their old glory, grandeur and hero ism had vanished. They were prostrate and at the mercy o any individual who was put at the helm of affairs by alien king ruling from the seat of power far away outside the boundarie of the State.

Whatever the Mughals did for the advancement of Kash- mir they were, like all imperialists, keen to see that the national

spirit of the people of the Valley, which had already been im- paired during the rule of later Shahmiris and the Chaks is totally shattered. This policy was pursued with redoubled vigour by the Afghans and the Sikhs. Kashmiri armies were disbanded and no man from the Valley was allowed to be recruited in the Afghan or Sikh forces. Consequently the people of the Valley gradually forgot their glorious martial traditions and became timid and coward. The oppression and terrorism that prevailed for more than a century in the country from 1750-1880 A.C. crushed the people and almost killed their soul. All Kashmiris whether they know anything about their past or not usually remember two things, the greatness of Bud Shah and the bestia- lity, savagery, cruelty and barbarity of the Afghans. The utter disgust of the Afghan rule is not confined to any class or creed ; all have it both Hindus and Muslims.

How the Kashmiris would have contrived to end the Sikh rule it is difficult to say. But before they could think of doing so, far-reaching political changes of a revolutionary character took place in India which brought the Kashmir Valley also with- in its orbit. Ranjit Singh died in 1839 A.C. He was succeeded by kings in the Punjab who were imbecile and inefficient. They came into clash with the British who had by then conquered the whole subcontinent of India beyond the boundary of the Sikh Empire. Gulab Singh, Raja of Jammu, who had risen very high in the court of Ranjit Singh during the lifetime of the Sikh Maharaja was appointed Prime Minister of the Punjab. As a shrewd but unscrupulous adventurer Gulab Singh foresaw that the British would be the future masters of the whole of India and therefore it was in his personal interest that he should be on friendly terms with them. He had already helped them in their wars against the Afghans in the North-Western Frontier in 1841 A. C. and thus he formed an alliance with them.

War broke out between Sikhs and the British in November 1845 A.C. The simple Sikh nobles asked Gulab Singh to lead them. He was already in correspondence with the British autho- rities and therefore readily seized the opportunity by taking the

onerous duties of the Prime Minister of the Sikh Empire upo himself. Though outwardly organising Sikhs against the British Gulab Singh was all the time thinking of his future and carvin a kingdom for himself. With such designs in his mind it wa natural that he would not like to present a bold and decisiv front to the British. So he left no stone unturned to bring about compromise. But his endeavour proved unsuccessful. The battl of Subraon was fought and the Sikhs were defeated. In th words of William Edwards: "Gulab Singh urged the army no to attempt attacking the British until he joined them and thi he evaded doing on one pretext or another knowing full wel that in due time the British would attack and capture the posi tion at Subraon".[1] It was by means such as these that Raj Gulab Singh earned the gratitude of the British diplomats and paved the way for the establishment of the Dogra State in the north of India.

After the battle of Subraon the Sikhs lost their indepen dence and the British marched on Lahore and captured it. On the 9th March, 1846 A.C. the Treaty of Lahore was signed. Among other things provided for in this treaty it was stipulated that Raja Gulab Singh would be recognised as an independent sovereign in such territories and districts in the hills as may be made over to the said Raja by separate agreement between him and the British Government. This separate agreement known to History by the name of the Treaty of Amritsar was signed on the 15th of March 1846 A.C. According to the treaty Gulab Singh was recognised as the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir both by the powerless Sikh Durbar and the British Government. He had to pay an amount of £1,500,000 to the British for the transfer to him of the Kashmir Province includ- ing Gilgit, which had been conquered by the Sikhs in 1842 A.C. Articles 1, 3, 9 and 10 of the Treaty of Amritsar will be read with interest.

ARTICLE 1

The British Government TRANSFERS and makes over for ever in independent possession to Maharaja Gulab Singh and the heirs

[1] *Reminiscences of a Bengal Civilian*, Page 104.

male of his body all the hilly or mountainous country with its dependencies situated to the eastward of the River Indus and the westward of the River Ravi including Chamba and excluding Lahul, being part of the territories ceded to the British Government by the Lahore State according to the provisions of the Article IV of the Treaty of Lahore, dated March 9, 1846.

ARTICLE 3

In consideration of the transfer made to him and his heirs by the provisions of the foregoing article Maharaja Gulab Singh will pay to the British Government the sum of seventy-five lakhs of rupees (*Nanakshahi*), fifty lakhs to be paid on ratification of this treaty and twenty-five lakhs on or before the 1st October of the current year, A.C. 1846.

ARTICLE 9

The British Government will give its aid to Maharaja Gulab Singh in protecting his territories from external enemies.

ARTICLE 10

Maharaja Gulab Singh will acknowledge the supremacy of the British Government and will in token of such supremacy present annually to the British Government one horse, twelve shawl goats of approved breed (six male and six female) and three pairs of Cashmere Shawls.

While making this transfer the British authorities in India did not so much as ascertain the views of the people of Kashmir on the subject. They did not consult even one of their leaders. It was altogether a sordid, shameful affair devoid of all sense of fairness, justice and equity. Two million of people in the Valley and Gilgit were sold like sheep and cattle to an alien adventurer and the whole transaction was made behind their back. The treaty consisting of ten articles makes no mention whatsoever of the rights, interests or the future of the people. Many years after this disgraceful transaction Dr. Mohammed Iqbal aptly sang about the enslaved people of Kashmir:

"Their fields, their crops, their streams
Even the peasants in the vale
They sold, they sold all, alas!
How cheap was the sale."

With the end of Sikh Rule and the infliction of the Dogra Raj under the protection of British Imperialism, the struggle for the liberation of Kashmir became a part of the war of independence for the whole of the Sub-continent of India which

in itself is an integral part of the world movement for establi ment of social democracy in all parts of the globe. Before proceed any further let us clarify a matter of importance abo which there appears to be confusion in the minds of ma people of Kashmir.

Two words are frequently used by the educated peop in general and politicians in particular while speaking abo the Liberation Movement of their country. They are *indepe dence* and *freedom*. They are often used without any di tinction which causes a confusion. A country is independe when it is ruled by the sons of the soil irrespective of th structure of the government which might be autocratic, ol garchical, constitutional, republican or democratic. On th other hand a country can be recognised as free only when th people living in it enjoy liberty in political, social, economi and intellectual spheres in accordance with the commonly estab lished standards of the time. Though generally it is very diffi cult yet in rare cases people have enjoyed a modicum of freedom even under alien rules and it is well known that all countrie of the world have at one time or another been independen but despotically, cruelly and ruthlessly governed.

People and politicians in Kashmir differ in their view about the past independence and freedom of their motherland Most of them are confused because they do not draw the dis tinction between the two. To all Hindus Kashmir lost its free dom and independence in 1339 A.C. when the Muslim rule wa firmly established in the Valley by Shah Mir. The Muslims do not think so. They are of the opinion that Kashmir was never so prosperous or progressive as when under the Muslim rule They believe that the Valley lost independence when the Sikhs conquered the country in 1819 A.C. Obviously the Sikhs cannot agree with them.

The Nationalists of Kashmir have been lately speaking with a divided voice. Some of them agree with their Hindu colleagues that Kashmir lost freedom when the alien Shah Mir usurped power at the death of Udayanadeva in 1339 A.C. But most of them, perhaps under the fear that such a view will

make them unpopular with their Muslim brethren, hold the view that Kashmir was enslaved by Akbar in 1586 A.C. when he annexed the Valley to the Mughal Empire.

Now all these views are erroneous, because they do not follow any principles. If by independence of Kashmir we mean the rule by her own people, history will tell us that Kashmir has been independent neither throughout the Buddhist or Hindu periods nor under the Muslim, Sikh or Dogra rules. Out of the twenty-eight dynasties that ruled the Valley till 1339 A.C., the founders of no less than ten came from outside. As we know Shah Mir belonged to the Swat Valley and the fore-father of Chaks, Lankar Chak, was a foreigner. About the Mughals, Pathans, Sikhs and Dogras one need not say that they were not Kashmiris.

As regards the freedom of the people the history of Kashmir records that just as kingly virtues like enlightenment, patronage of learning, love of their subjects and solicitude for their advancement and prosperity, were neither the monopoly of Kashmiri nor of non-Kashmiri monarchs; similarly the vices of power like despotism, cruelty and profligacy also fell equally to the share of both.

From times immemorial, Kashmir patriots have fought for both independence as well as freedom of their country. But bitter experience in life in the long course of history had taught them that if both could not be had together they should prefer freedom to independence. For that reason when capable leaders were not forthcoming in their motherland, the people invited strong and noble-minded men from outside to rule over them and then they owned them as their kings. It may be that the leaders lacked a strong national sentiment and were more powerhunters than patriots. But as it is if a ruler proved good and benevolent the people did not care whether he was a Kashmiri or not. This view was so popular during the earlier period that Kalhana did not find it worthwhile to mention in his History that Asoka conquered Kashmir and annexed it to his Indian Empire. To him the Mauryan Emperor was as good as any Kashmiri king.

It will be remembered that Kota Rani, when she attain political maturity, was anxious to preserve the independen of her motherland by marrying Udayanadeva in 1322 A.C. the death of Rinchen (Sultan Sadar-ud-Din) though she mus have been fully aware of the fact that her Hindu consort wa unfit to give any freedom to the country by establishing peac or introducing measures of good government for the prosperity of the people. Even after Udayanadeva ran away to Ladakh to save his life at the time of the invasion by Urdil, Kota Ran recalled him and reinstalled him on the throne thereby incur ring the displeasure of Shah Mir. The motive of the queen was to preserve the independence of Kashmir. For reasons beyond her power she was unsuccessful in her endeavours.

The same was the case when during the reign of Fath Shah and Mohammed Shah the two great Kashmiri patriots Kazi Chak and Abdal Magre, forgetting their own differences and ignoring the confusion and chaos that had been produced in the country by weaklings on the throne, rallied round the State banner and heroically fought against Babur and Mirza Haider Doughlat. This time Kashmir Nationalism won but the victory did not last long. The spirit of freedom triumphed over the sentiment of independence. As has been described earlier only three decades later, a deputation of the leading nobles of Kashmir went to the Court of Akbar with the request that the Emperor may despatch his armies to liberate the people of the Valley from the demoralised, corrupt and inefficient Chak rule.

Thus it is evident that for the people of Kashmir the difficult choice between independence and freedom has presented itself now and again in the course of the long history of five thousand years. It was only in the thirties of the present century that Kashmiris began to struggle simultaneously for independence as well as freedom with how much of success and failure we shall now proceed to survey.

The handing over of Kashmir to the Dogras could not be effected without trouble. Gulab Singh despatched some troops

under Wazir Lakhpat to take over the charge but the Governor Sheikh Imam-ud-Din who appears not to have been so unpopular with the people as other governors appointed by the Lahore Durbar before him, refused to surrender. A fight ensued between the Kashmiris and the Dogras on the plain lying between the Vitasta and the fort of the Shankrachari hill in which Gulab Singh's troops were defeated and Wazir Lakhpat was slain. Gulab Singh appealed to the British to carry out the provisions of the treaty. A mixed force of the British and the Sikhs was promptly despatched. Meawhile Imam-ud-Din came to know all about the defeat of the Sikhs at Subraon and the Treaty of Amritsar. The transfer of the country was effected without any further ado. Thus by the middle of the nineteenth century in 1846 A.C. was formed the present State of Jammu and Kashmir including Ladakh, Baltistan and Gilgit under the first ruler of the Dogra dynasty.

Foreign rule was not new to the Kashmiris in 1846 A.C. But Dogras were strange foreign rulers who were themselves vassals of another mightier power which had by then brought the whole of India under its sway. Besides, the Dogras were not like those alien masters who came in the past and lived in the Valley as its permanent inhabitants. The Dogras have always considered Jammu as their home and Kashmir as the conquered country. As we shall presently see they established a sort of Dogra imperialism in the State in which the Dogras were elevated to the position of the masters and all non-Dogra communities and classes were given the humble places of inferiors. The people of the Valley were thus brought under the imperialism of the Dogras which itself was functioning as a vassal of the super-imperialism of the British. But though Dogra imperialism brought nothing but misery, thraldom, physical and mental deterioration in its wake, the other imperialism did not come without some blessings. By coming under the British suzerainty the Valley began to have the impact of western ideas and modern civilisation which finally awakened the people to demand their birth-right of independence and freedom.

It was a great misfortune of the Kashmiris that t British, after having defeated the Sikhs, did not take the Val directly under their own control. They had some solid reaso not to do so. But had they taken that step Kashmiris wou have been spared much misery and many hardships that th had to endure during the Dogra rule. Several problems th have confronted the Kashmiris, in the past hundred years wou not have cropped up at all. And the present accession issu would surely not have been there. Besides, under the Britis administration Kashmiris would have imbibed modernism quit rapidly. Modernism did come to the Valley during the Dogr rule but it was not because Dogras wanted to make th Kashmiris modern in outlook, in education and in culture but i spite of them. As a matter of fact they have worked as a brak on the progress of the people of Kashmir. For their own reason the British bemoaned the step they took in handing over th Valley to the Dogras. They even utilised dubious methods t get it back. But then it was too late.

Be that as it may, let us proceed with the narration of ou history of the Freedom Movement during the past hundre years.

Maharaja Gulab Singh proved to be a strong and ster ruler. He tried to bring back peace and order for which th people were clamouring. The methods he applied, however were of a savage nature and he was very rapacious and greedy In his *Travels*, Vigne narrates that an insurrection took plac near Poonch against the authority of Gulab Singh who went i person to suppress it. "Some of his prisoners were flayed aliv under his own eyes. The executioner hesitated and Gulab Singh asked him if he were about to operate upon his own father and mother, and rated him for being so chicken-hearted. He then ordered one or two of the skins to be stuffed with straw.....The figures were then planted on the wayside so that passerby might see it ; and Gulab Singh called his son's attention to it, and told him to take a lesson in the Art of Governing".

Gulab Singh tried to rule the country justly according to his own lights, but partly owing to the exigencies of the unset-

and unprogressive times and partly to his own avarice and d, he could not improve the economic condition of the ple. It continued to be most dilapidated, verging on starva- "This last state was worse than the first", wrote Lieute- nt Colonel Torrens, "for Gulab Singh went beyond his pre- cessors in the gentle acts of undue taxation and extortion. y had taxed heavily it is true, but he sucked the very life od of the people. They had laid violent hands on a large pro- tion of the fruits of the earth, the profits of the loom and the work of men's hands, but he skinned the very flints to fill his coffers". Even K.M. Pannikar, who served as an official of the government under the Dogras and wrote an inspired bio- graphy of the Maharaja had to admit that Gulab Singh "did not achieve his ends by methods which were always beyond criticism. He did not hesitate to resort to tricks and stratagems which would, in ordinary life, be considered dishonourable. He was trained in a hard school, where lying, intrigue and treachery were all considered part and parcel of politics".[1]

Gulab Singh was succeeded by his son Ranbir Singh in 1858 A.C. He was a man of peace and respected men of learn- ing. But like his father he did not or could not improve the lot of his people. The difficulty with the Dogras was that they were not well educated or informed themselves ; they took ex- treme caution not to allow the Britishers to interfere in their administration with the result that the people remained igno- rant and backward for a long time till the Imperialist Govern- ment was forced to take the matter in their own hands and introduce the necessary reforms. According to Sir Francis Younghusband : "In the early sixties cultivation was decreasing, the people were wretchedly poor there were few men of respect- able, none of wealthy appearance" and "there were almost prohibitive duties levied on all merchandise, imported or export- ed". The method of levying taxes was stated by Sir Francis in the following words :

"On the manufacture of shawls, parallel restrictions were placed. Wool was taxed as it entered Kashmir ; the manufacturer was taxed

[1] *Gulab Singh*, Page 152.

for every workman he employed, and also at various stages of the process according to the value of fabric. Lastly there was the enormous duty of 85 per cent *ad valorem*. Butchers, bakers, carpenters, boatmen, and even prostitutes were taxed. Poor coolies, who were engaged to carry load for travellers, had to give up half their earnings."

And with the revenue that accrued to the State coffers by this method of exorbitant taxation, what was spent on the moral and material progress of the people ? About half a lakh of rupees was spent upon education and another half lakh on repairing of the "paths".

Famines have been by no means a rarity in the Valley but the famine of 1877 A.C. was so severe that it is still remembered with horror by Kashmiris. When this calamity fell upon the people the administration was most inefficient to protect them. As a result thousands of people died of starvation and dead bodies could be seen by heaps lying on the roadside. A number of valleys were deserted ; whole villages lay in ruins ; the city of Srinagar was half destroyed. The business came to a standstill and the whole population passed through the most miserable period.

CHAPTER SIX

DAWN OF MODERNISM

AT the death of Ranbir Singh in 1885 A.C. his eldest son Pratap Singh ascended the throne. The condition of the Valley of Kashmir at that time was deplorable. In his book Sir Walter Lawrence who served as the first Settlement Commissioner of the State writes that in 1887 A.C. the Kashmir State was bankrupt. "The rich land was left uncultivated and the army was employed in forcing the villagers to plough and sow, and worse still, the soldiers came at the harvest time and when the share of the State had been seized and these men of war had helped themselves, there was very little given to the unfortunate peasants to tide over the cruel winter when the snow lies deep and temperature falls below zero".[1] Sir Walter records that when he started settlement of the land everything save air and water was under taxation. Even the office of the gravedigger was taxed.

It was not surprising that the vitality of the people had been extremely undermined and the country witnessed successive epidemics of cholera in 1888, 1892, 1900-1902, 1906-1907 and 1910 A.C. and an outbreak of plague in 1903-1904 A.C. which decimated the population. Other misfortunes were the earthquake shocks of 1885 A.C. which were very severe in intensity and heavy floods of 1893 and 1903 A.C. which destroyed property and produce of land enormously.

At the time of Pratap Singh's accession to the throne the Dogras had already ruled the Valley for nearly forty years. Yet beyond restoring order in the land they had been able to achieve little. Indeed as we have shown above the people had deteriorated physically as well as intellectually. The cultural level of the Valley had gone down considerably. The credit for

[1] *The India we served*, Page 128.

maintenance of peace should go to Pax Britannica because, a... from the Dogra's barbarous methods of administering just... it was in reality the prowess of the mighty British Governm... that kept the internal conditions undisturbed. Had the Kas... miris known that the Dogras had no support of the power... British, undoubtedly they should have made attempts to ov... throw them quite early in their rule. But they were aware... the fact that despite Imam-ud-Din's victory in 1846 A.C. o... the Dogras, that governor had to surrender because Gu... Singh had the redoubtable British at his back. Therefore th... did not make any attempt at insurrection. Instead they thoug... of approaching the Imperial Power with petitions and grievanc... against the absolutism and despotism of the Dogras.

As early as 1877 A.C., during the days of the great famin... a memorandum was stealthily submitted to the British Vicero... at Delhi by some unknown Kashmiris making specific charg... against Ranbir Singh. The memorandum was never publishe... in full. Parts of it that were subsequently quoted by som... informed British writers in their books, show that certai... charges levelled were very grave in character. It was said tha... in order to save the expense of feeding his people during th... famine the Maharaja actually drowned his poor Muslim subject... by boat-loads in the Vular lake. The British Government... appointed a mixed commission to inquire into the truth of th... charges but as no one had the courage to come forward to... substantiate them, the Maharaja was exonerated. It appear... that the memorandum contained also grievances about mis... government and maladministration to which the Maharaja had... no satisfactory answer. The British Government, however,... realized that they could not help the Kashmiris in any manner... unless they could have a direct hand in the administration of... the country. This they could not dare to do under the pro... visions of the Treaty of Amritsar which left the Dogras comp... letely free to deal with the internal administration as they... liked. The British authorities were therefore hesitant and... unwilling to do anything in 1877 A.C.

But soon after in their own imperialist interest, the

British had to step in. Owing to proximity of Czarist Russia on the north of the State, Gilgit, Baltistan and Ladakh were as important and strategic places then as they are now when the big bear has turned red. Britishers were not on good terms with the Czar. They needed to fortify and supervise the frontier and for doing so they decided to interfere. At the death of Ranbir Singh there were his four sons, all hungry for power, as claimants to the throne of Kashmir. Pratap Singh the eldest was conscious of it. Therefore when at the time of his installation on the *Gaddi* he was confronted with the conditions which were formally presented by a British Officer on behalf of the Viceroy that the Maharaja shall have to first introduce certain reforms in his administration and secondly accept a British Officer as a Resident, Pratap Singh had no alternative but to accept these. The matter did not end there. After a while by playing his brothers, chiefly Amar Singh, against him, Pratap Singh was made to accept an arrangement by which he was relieved of all part in the administration which was placed, subject to the control of the Resident, in the hands of a Council of Regency. Doubtless this was a shameful and sordid affair on the part of British imperialists. It was thoroughly dishonest,crooked and mean. Nevertheless it proved a blessing in disguise for the people of the State.

Much excitement was caused in India and abroad by an announcement in the Press that the Maharaja of Kashmir had been found guilty of treasonable activities and that there was ample evidence to prove his treachery. It was said further that the Maharaja, conscious of his guilt, had abdicated and placed his letter of abdication in the hands of the British authorities. Political India in the eighties of the last century was the champion of the rights of native princes. It was considered a patriotic duty by the leaders and the nationalist Press to protect the princes against the onslaughts of the foreign Government. Irrational patriotism considered native rule, however corrupt, absolutist, despotic and cruel as preferable to the domination by the British. Besides, the Maharaja being a Hindu and the ruler of the holy land of Kashmir, became an additional reason

for the Indian leaders to see that he was not deposed. A storm was raised over the imbroglio in which the voice of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of Calcutta was the loudest. The paper published a document, a minute recorded in the file by H.M. Durand, the then Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, which proved that the British were anxious to take the frontier districts of the State under their direct supervision and for that reason they were determined to interfere in the internal affairs of Kashmir. The Viceroy was very much perturbed and annoyed to read the document in the Press. The storm raised by nationalist India over Kashmir had upset the apple cart of the British. They therefore abandoned the idea of deposing the Maharaja and instead forced him to accept a Council of Regency as already mentioned. Looking back at the events after the lapse of nearly seventy years, one cannot refrain from observing that this time the decision of the British was most unfortunate for the people of Kashmir. Had the British boldly stuck to their resolve, no matter with what purpose, deposed the Maharaja and installed their own direct administration, it would have speedily introduced modernism in the Valley.

However, the appointment of the Regency was better than the unbridled autocracy of the Dogra. The Council of Regency consisted of two brothers of the Maharaja (1) Raja Ram Singh and (2) Raja Amar Singh, (3) an experienced European, (4) Rai Bahadur Pandit Bhag Ram, and (5) Rai Bahadur Pandit Suraj Koul. With the presence of the experienced European as a member and under the direct and close supervision of the British Resident the Council set about its responsibilities and functions in the right earnest.

Having made the position of their Resident quite strong over the affairs of the State and having given a modern bias to the administration of the country, the British gradually restored Pratap Singh to power first in 1891 A.C. as President of the State Council and after some years in 1905 A.C. as a full fledged ruler.

Imperial interests apart, the Government of India was anxious to replace the feudal structure of the State by modern

bureaucratic form of administration. With this purpose in view the British Resident began to interest himself through the State Council in starting and organising all the departments dealing with different branches of administration. But there was a difficulty in making the endeavours a success. There were few local men with the requisite qualifications available to do the jobs and fewer schools and no colleges in the State where the citizens could have been educated for the task.

So men with Western education and training were imported in large numbers from the neighbouring province of the Punjab. "Armies of outsiders trailed behind the officers from the plains with no more interest than to draw as much as they could, and then to depart leaving behind their kindred as successors to continue the drain; and thus was established a hierarchy in the services with the result that profits and wealth passed into the hands of the outsiders and the indigenous subjects lost enterprise and independence". Thus at the beginning of the present century when Maharaja Pratap Singh was fully restored to power a new problem confronted the people; that of facing the outsider who had occupied every position of vantage in the administration of the country. From those early times, the struggle for the rights of the people living in the State against outsiders took a definite shape. While the masses were groaning under the unbearable load of taxes and crushing economic poverty, the middle and the upper classes felt displeased and resentful because of this foreign domination in every branch of administration. The feeling of resentment which was running underground for centuries, found an outward expression, though it was not yet directed against the ruler or his administration as such. Representations were made to the Government of India, who, in a letter to the Kashmir Durbar at the close of the last century, sent instructions that in the matter of State employment *mulkis* should be given preference over the outsiders and that this principle should be strictly adhered to. This letter was circulated through all the departments of the State. But the instructions were vague, and it did not produce any effect owing to the fact that any outsider

could call himself a *mulki* by simply declaring himself to be one. The struggle continued and in 1912 A.C. a definition of 'State Subject' was formulated for the first time. A State subject was one who had obtained an *Ijazat Nama*, a certificate to the effect that the holder was entitled to all the rights of citizenship. Evidently this was inadequate and anyone could secure the certificate for the mere asking. Outsiders continued to be imported in even larger numbers by their kith and kin who held the Ministers' jobs, besides almost all the posts of the Heads of Departments. Meanwhile, Kashmiris had advanced in education. Early in 1905 A.C. through the strenuous efforts of Mrs Annie Besant, some luminaries of the Theosophical Society and Pandit Bala Kaul of the Sahib family, a Hindu college, which subsequently came to be known as the Sri Pratap College, had been started at Srinagar. Another college was started by the government in the city of Jammu. Many young men passed through the portals of these institutions after completing their course. They imbibed the spirit of the new age. Their minds were full of the ideas of the onrushing tide of democracy in the West. They read with emotion about political movements of Turky, Ireland, Egypt and other countries as also the part young men played in these movements. They saw what, nearer home, young Bengal did to defeat the plan of Lord Curzon to partition that province. Life became visible in the decayed bones of Kashmir again. Her soul began to breathe. The hearts of the people throbbed. The spirit of independence revived and with it came the desire to turn out the outsiders, and to fight for the freedom of the motherland.

Another factor, as yet unnoticeable, was taking shape. Muslims, who form the great majority of the population of the State and who had not taken kindly to modern education, began to feel their backwardness. The cry of "down with the outsiders" was raised mostly by the Hindus. Sensible Muslims did not oppose it but before taking any active part in it, they wanted to make up the deficiency in the matter of education. Time and again they approached the government to grant them some facilities enabling them to make rapid advance in the sphere of

education. It appears that these requests were not heeded in the beginning. The British Government, who had become defenders of the rights of the Muslim majority against a Hindu Maharaja while proposing to deprive Pratap Singh of his powers, did practically nothing to push the Muslims on the path of literacy and education during the period when the Kashmir administration was under the Residency Raj.

The demand of Muslims became irresistible and the Maharaja was moved at last to do something in this direction. In 1916 A. C., Mr Sharp, then Educational Commissioner with the Government of India, visited, at the request of the Kashmir Durbar, the educational institutions in the State, examined the Muslim demands, enquired into their grievances and submitted a report containing his recommendations for the guidance of the State authorities. These recommendations were sanctioned by His Highness but were lightly treated by his Ministers, and instructions issued by him were seldom followed by those in charge of the Education Department, who were invariably non-Kashmiris. As a matter of fact, soon after its publication, the report was safely put in the archives from where nobody could find it out. Fifteen years later an official enquiry commission which was presided over by Mr. B.J. Glancy, Political Secretary to the Government of India, had to admit that "no one appears to be aware of the nature of the report submitted by the educational expert". The Muslims rightly felt aggrieved over such a state of affairs. For years they complained and protested, fretted and fumed, but all to no purpose.

Other communities were in the meantime making some progress. Especially in the Kashmir province the Pandits were making rapid advance in education and had on this account begun to capture the offices as subordinate clerks. Kashmir Muslims became impatient. They had now many grievances against the authorities which were collected and sent to the Maharaja with no results. At this stage a bold step was taken by a few leading Kashmiri Muslims. Recklessly enough a memorial was submitted by them to Lord Reading, then Viceroy of India, when he visited Kashmir in 1924 A. C. In the course of the

memorial the Muslims demanded that proprietary rights of the land should be given to the peasants ; that a larger number of Mohammedans should be employed in the State service ; that steps should be taken to improve the condition of Mohammedan education in the State ; that the system of *begar* should be abolished ; that the work of the Co-operative Department should be extended ; that all Muslim mosques in possession of the Government should be released and handed over to the Muslims. There was nothing revolutionary in the demands which were modest and reasonable. But the Maharaja took an offence at its submission to the British Viceroy. The memorial was signed by some eminent *jagirdars* and the two *Mir Waizes* (The Religious Heads of Muslims) also affixed their signatures to it. Some demonstrations in the State-owned silk factory at Srinagar and disturbances of semi-political nature took place in the city during the summer of that year. But everything was in an embryonic form then and all this was put down by the authorities with a firm hand.

A Committee of three official members, consisting of a European, a Hindu and a Mohammedan, examined the memorial and reported that there was no substance in it ! Some of the memorialists were exiled and their landed property confiscated. The two *Mir Waizes* were let off with a warning, but all official privileges enjoyed by them were immediately stopped. The demonstrators were summarily dealt with and punished.

Maharaja Pratap Singh was unostentatious, peaceful and a benevolent ruler. He was deeply religious and orthodox in his ways. He was genuinely anxious to see even-handed justice administered to all classes and communities of the people. Though the State did not make any great progress in his time yet Pratap Singh lived to abolish a large number of taxes including the Muslim Marriage Tax.

Owing to the exorbitant taxes and the loot of the corrupt officials of the government, most of the cultivators had given up their lands and abandoned the profession of cultivation before Pratap Singh came to the throne. It was with great difficulty that Sir Walter Lawrence, the first Settlement Commis-

sioner, could persuade people to take possession of land. With the bitter experience of the treatment that the authorities meted out to the possessors and cultivators of the soil, city-dwellers and the peasants alike refused to accept the offer of the Settlement Commissioner in the beginning. Ultimately Lawrence's great powers of persuasion succeeded, and he was able to parcel out the land among the people.

The main features of the settlement which Sir Walter effected were : (i) the State demand was fixed for fourteen years, (ii) payment in cash was substituted for payment in kind, (iii) the use of force in the collection of revenue was done away with, (iv) *begar* (forced labour) in its more objectionable form was abolished, (v) occupancy rights were conferred on *zamindars* in undisputed lands, (vi) the status of privileged holders of land was investigated and land in excess of the sanctioned area assessed at the ordinary rates, (vii) waste lands were entered as *khalisa*, (viii) permanent but non-alienable hereditary rights were granted to those who accepted the first assessment, and all land was carefully evaluated on the basis of produce, previous collection and possibility of irrigation. The *rasum* and exactions of *jagirdars* and big landlords were abolished and the rents and liabilities of the cultivators were defined.

The land was parcelled out but its proprietorship in the Kashmir Province and the Frontier districts was retained by the Maharaja and the landholders, whether they cultivated or only possessed land as *chakdars*, were made tenants-at-will. In very rare cases were they declared to be occupancy tenants. The Kashmir landlords had the right to occupy land so long as they paid the revenue as it fell due but they could neither sell nor mortgage it. The tenants-at-will held land subject to the will of the proprietor, who could eject them at any time. They were of two kinds, namely (i) those who held land direct from a landholder or the State and (ii) those who held land under occupancy tenants of class (i). In Kashmir occupancy tenants consisted mainly of those tenants who held land at the time of Lawrence's settlement and had once been declared by a competent court to be such. In the cities and towns of Kashmir and the frontier

districts people were given the rights of selling or mortgaging the land. In almost the whole of the Jammu Province, excepting the three tehsils of Ramnagar, Basohli and Mirpore, the people were declared to be proprietors of land which was parcelled out to tenants. In these three tehsils landholders were *malguzars* and enjoyed the rights of selling or mortgaging it. This is a glaring instance of the differential treatment that the people of Kashmir Province received under the Dogra Rule–a case of provincial prejudice. This was the first time in the history of Kashmir that people lost proprietorship of their own land.

Maharaja Pratap Singh died in September 1925 A.C. and having no male heir of his own was succeeded by his nephew Raja Hari Singh, the son of Raja Amar Singh. Having known something about him when he worked before becoming the Maharaja in the capacity of the Senior Member of the State Council, educated classes among the people had placed many hopes in the new ruler. But they were disillusioned before long. Soon after his accession to the throne, Hari Singh under the advice of certain short-sighted Rajputs began to form a sort of Rajput oligarchy. Mediocre Rajputs became Heads of various Departments of the State Administration. The Military was exclusively reserved for the Dogras, particularly Rajputs, and more than sixty per cent of the gazetted appointments went to them. This invidious distinction became intolerable and voices, indistinct in the beginning, were raised in protest.

At the start of the year 1929 A.C., Kashmir was already seething with discontent. An intelligent observer like Sir Albion Bannerji deplored such state of affairs. He was disgusted with the unimaginative mind of the rulers, and resigned the post of the Foreign and Political Minister which he had held for over two years. On 15th March, 1929 A.C. his observations on the political, social and economic conditions in the State made before a representative of the Associated Press at Lahore produced a deep effect on the minds of the people of Kashmir. He said :

> "Jammu and Kashmir State is labouring under many disadvantages, with a large Mohammedan population absolutely illiterate, labouring under poverty and very low economic conditions of living in

> the villages and practically governed like dumb driven cattle. There is no touch between the Government and the people, no suitable opportunity for representing grievances and the administrative machinery itself requires overhauling from top to bottom to bring it up to the modern conditions of efficiency. It has at present little or no sympathy with the people's wants and grievances.
>
> "There is hardly any public opinion in the State. As regards the Press it is practically non-existent with the result that the government is not benefited to the extent that it should be by the impact of healthy criticism".

Sir Albion stated that in the villages of Kashmir people were living very poor lives and the artisans of Kashmir were finding it very difficult to earn a living owing to the unsympathetic attitude of the government. He advised that something should be done early to raise the standard of the masses who had fallen a prey to various abuses and evils owing to grinding poverty. There was no one to listen to this sage advice. Indeed under Hari Singh's rule Kashmiris began to be suppressed in many ways by the Dogras as had not been done before during the time of his predecessors. To the end of Pratap Singh's reign, the headquarters of the Durbar moved seasonally to the two important cities of the State. Jammu used to be the seat of government during the winter and Srinagar was the summer headquarters of the government. But soon after Hari Singh became the Maharaja he fixed his headquarters permanently in Jammu. It was suspected that the arrangements were made, firstly to force Kashmiris to relinquish their jobs and secondly in this way to make their further recruitment in higher offices difficult. It also affected the trade of Kashmir Province to some extent. The political importance of Kashmir Province in general and Srinagar in particular was undoubtedly undermined.

The doors of the Military were closed against the Kashmiris, both Hindus and Muslims. The regiments of the Maharaja were formed either by Hindu Dogras or Muslim Dogras, Kangra Rajputs and Gurkhas and even Punjabi Sikhs from outside the State could have a place in the armed forces of Kashmir and were as a matter of fact employed in the Infantry and

the Rifles. But not the Hindus nor the Muslims of Kashmir who inherited the glorious martial traditions from such mighty rulers as Lalitaditya and Shahab-ud-Din. "In the army reorganisation I pleaded for the enlistment of a double company of Kashmiris", revealed G.E.C. Wakefield, Hari Singh's Army Minister in his *Recollections*, "but one day His Highness told me that his grandfather, Maharaja Ranbir Singh had raised a whole regiment and, having uniformed and drilled them for six months in Srinagar, gave orders that they should march to Jammu. A deputation of their officers waited upon him with a petition pointing out that, in making arrangements for the march, no provision had been made for police for their protection. The regiment was disbanded". This canard was only an excuse to hide the racial bias of the Dogra Ruler. Very soon after stigmatising the brave Kashmiris in this way, Hari Singh learnt to his cost how heroically the people of the Valley rebelled against him. In his *Recollections* G.E.C. Wakefield admits that "during the riots which occurred in 1931, the wounds of dead Kashmiris were all in front"; so that no fighter for freedom had turned his back to run away. All had cheerfully faced the bullets of the Dogras.

The notorious and infamous case of class prejudice was the one in which all non-Rajputs in the State were shamefully deprived of a right which was bestowed on the Rajputs by order of the Maharaja. While consolidating the Arms Act in 1940, Hari Singh's Government disarmed the whole nation but allowed the Hindu Rajputs, the members of his own community, to possess, one fire-arm with sufficient ammunition for each family for purposes of religious ritual and worship. Even the most dull-headed man could see that religion was but a cover to arm the pretorean guards in the State against the rising tide of popular movement for the achievement of freedom. Appeals were made to the Maharaja by the Nationalist leaders of Kashmir to abrogate the law but to no purpose.

In the Civil Administration higher appointments were practically reserved for the Punjabis in the reign of Pratap Singh and for the Rajputs when Hari Singh was the Ruler.

On the one hand the economic condition of the people was deteriorating and the masses were becoming poorer and poorer day by day, on the other the Dogra Ruler was pursuing a policy which positively discouraged and suppressed the non-Dogra communities in the country. This created deep resentment and anger in all classes of people in the Valley. Hari Singh and the Dogra Rajputs who composed the oligarchy proved by their behaviour what Fredric Drew had said half a century before. He wrote in 1875 A.C. :

> "Judged of in this capacity—that of agents and instruments of Government—we must allow to the Dogras considerable failing. They have little tact; they have not the art of conciliating the governed, of treating them in such a way as to attach them. Those who are high in authority have no width enough of view to see that the interests of both governors and governed may be in a great measure coincident. As a rule they are not liked by the dependent nations even to that degree in which, with moderately good management, a ruling race may fairly hope to be liked by its alien subjects".

If all classes of people in the Valley were discontented with the Dogras in 1930 A.C. the Muslims had added reasons for becoming sullen. Firstly they form the large majority (nearly 78 per cent) of the population in the State and 94 per cent in the Valley itself. They were treated more unfairly in every sphere of life than the Kashmir Hindus. There were laws that hit a Muslim very hard. I have already mentioned the Marriage Tax which only a Muslim had to pay on every marriage that took place in his family. This was abolished by Pratap Singh. But there are others which continue to remain on the Statute Book to this day. Such are the Cow-slaughter Law and the Law of Inheritance. According to the former any one (always a Muslim) has to undergo an imprisonment for the offence of killing or injuring a cow or abetting in it. The imprisonment can be up to a period of ten years. This law is barbarous and on many an occasion the entire male population of a village has been tortured by the police when making enquiries and investigations into a case of this nature. According to the Law of Inheritance no apostate from one religion to another is allowed to inherit ancestral property. Islam is a proselytiz-

ing creed. Therefore the Muslims have always considered t
law a hindrance in the way of the spread of their religion.

The poverty of the Muslim masses was appalling. Dressed
rags which could hardly hide his body and barefooted, a Musl
peasant presented the appearance rather of a starving begg
than of one who filled the coffers of the State. He work
laboriously in the fields during the six months of the summ
to pay the State its revenues and taxes, the officials the
rasum and the money-lender his interest. Most of them we
landless labourers working as serfs of the absentee landlord
They hardly earned, as their share of the produce, enough fo
more than three months For the rest they had to earn b
other means. During the six months they were unemploye
and had to go outside the boundaries of the State to work a
labourers in big towns and cities of British India. Their lot, a
such, was no good, and many of them died every year, unknow
unwept and unsung outside their homes. The disgraceful
environments and unkind surroundings in which so many o
them died was a slur alike on the people and the governmen
of the country to which they belonged.

Almost the whole brunt of the official corruption ha
been borne by the Muslim masses. The Police, the Revenu
Department, the Forest officials, and even the employees o
the Co-operative Societies, had their palms oiled by exactio
of the usual *rasum*. Nobody felt any sympathy with this
distressing picture of poverty. The channels of human kind-
ness and mercy had run dry. To loot the peasants was no sin
society did not disapprove of it.

In the countryside the Muslim was synonymous with the
hewer of wood and drawer of water. All sort of dirty and
menial work was to be done by him. A Hindu was respectable
in the eyes of the society, and the Muslim, because he was a
Muslim, was looked down upon as belonging to an inferior class.
Of course, there were throughout the country, a good many
well-to-do Muslims possessing money, power and influence. But
man for man even they could hardly claim equal rank and recog-
nition with the Hindus of the same class.

DAWN OF MODERNISM

In political, economic and social conditions such as these, it was easy for a Muslim leader to rouse the patriotic and religious sentiments of the whole community against the Dogra rule. It was easy to make a Muslim believe that his ills were entirely due to the Hindu rule under which he lived. It needed some educated young men with burning patriotic zeal to carry this message to the Muslim masses but there were none forthcoming in 1925 when the Dogras suppressed the freedom movement which was sponsored by the signatories to the historic memorial that had been submitted to Lord Reading.

But the Kashmiri Pandits had taken advantage of the presence of schools and the college in Srinagar which were started in 1905 and got themselves educated. By 1925 hundreds of Pandit graduates had left the portals of the college with great hopes to hold posts of responsibility in the administration. In this they were frustrated first by Punjabis and next by Dogra Rajputs who were wielding authority in places of power. Pandits felt aggrieved and disappointed with the policy of the government which excessively favoured the people of the Jammu Province. The policy of provincial discrimination became pronounced and acute in the reign of Hari Singh. For six years from 1925-31 educated Pandit young men carried on a well organised agitation in the outside Press (no freedom of Press was allowed in Kashmir then) against this policy of the Dogras. Pandits not only demanded a due share in the public services of the State ; they demanded freedom of Press and freedom to form associations, establishment of a representative legislature and adequate representation of the people in the administration of the State at the highest level. This movement is known as "Kashmir for Kashmiris" movement. As a result of this, a definition of the term "Hereditary State Subject" was formed and duly passed into a law on the 31st January 1927 A.C. According to this definition "all persons born and residing in the State before the commencement of the reign of Maharaja Gulab Singh Bahadur and also persons who settled therein before the commencement of Samvat 1942 (1885 A.C.) and have since been permanently residing" in the country are

hereditary subjects of the State. An order was issued by t
Maharaja forbidding the employment of non-State subjects
public services; they were even disallowed to purchase a
agricultural land. This definition all at once stopped the r
ruitment of the Punjabis in the services. But it did not equa
benefit all the communities residing in the State. With H
Singh's pro-Dogra policy in operation, the people of Jammu p
ticularly Rajputs got the most of the big jobs while the Pand
were recruited as clerks in offices vacated by the Punjabis. Ne
less to say that the Muslims were as yet out of the picture.

Their recruitment in offices as subordinate clerks d
not appease the Pandits but they could not hit upon any effe
tive weapon of agitation against the government beyond t
propaganda in the outside Press. Being a microscopic minori
in the population of the Valley the Pandits were not in a po
tion to start any mass movement. They had therefore to rema
content with what they did.

But things now began to move quite rapidly inside as w
as outside the State. An organisation had been set up in t
Punjab by those wealthy and influential Kashmir Muslims w
had left their ancient land during the times of the Sikhs
reside in different parts of India. They collected funds a
granted scholarships to the poor but promising young Muslim
in the Valley to prosecute their studies. A batch of such youn
men returned to the Valley in 1931 A.C. after receiving highe
education in Aligarh and other universities.

In 1927 A.C. the British Government instituted an A
White Commission under the presidentship of Sir John Simo
to report on the desired and needed constitutional reforms i
India. India felt insulted by the formation of such a Com
mission. On arrival in India the Commission was boycotte
and big demonstrations were held against it. Enthusiastic
political activities followed those demonstrations which culmi
nated in the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930 A.C. unde
the leadership of the Congress. It was a mass movement on a
very huge scale unknown in the annals of the subcontinent.
The movement terminated successfully with a pact on important

national problems between Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, and
Mahatma Gandhi as the leader of the Congress.

This glorious chapter in the history of the national move-
ment in India could not but produce profound effect on the
minds of the Kashmir Muslim young men who were studying
in the different universities and had therefore the opportunity
to witness the various phases of the movement with their own
eyes. Some of them also participated in the Muslim League
Session at Allahabad in 1930 A.C. where for the first time Dr.
Mohammed Iqbal adumbrated his theory of Panislamism and
a separate State for the Muslims of the subcontinent in his
presidential address.

Fired with the spark of freedom and enthused with the
emotion of Panislamism a batch of young men returned to
their home early in 1931 A.C. The echoes and the reverbera-
tions of the Civil Disobedience Movement had been heard in
the mountains and the valleys of Kashmir in advance of the
return of these young men. It had created an atmosphere of
defiance to cruel and despotic authority of the alien Dogra
rulers. The stage was set with all the paraphernalia; only the
actors were needed to play their parts. Who but these
educated and enthusiatic young men were best suited for the
task?

But it took some months for the plot to thicken. Like
their Pandit compatriots some years earlier, these Muslim
young men, most of whom belonged to the middle class, desired
to enter government service. Had those at the helm of affairs
been capable of a little foresight and imagination, they would
have gladly and readily provided good jobs for these young men
who were the first among the Kashmir Muslims to receive higher
education. Unfortunately the Punjabi and Dogra Hindu officers
could not think that Kashmiris could also be installed in places
of power and responsibility, particularly when they belonged to
the Muslim community. At best the rulers could be persuaded
to bestow a few lower jobs of teachers and clerks on the young
educated Muslims. But here too a difficulty arose. By 1931
A.C. Kashmiri Pandits had entered the offices in large numbers

as clerks. Following in the footsteps of the Punjabis a Dogras, the Pandits, by hook or by crook, made it difficult f the Muslim young men to get even these subordinate jobs. N without a struggle did a few of the young men succeed in secu ing some humble positions for themselves. Among the fortuna few was one Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah who, though a M. Sc. of the Aligarh University, became a junior teacher in Srinagar High School on Rs. 60 p.m. though many of th gazetted officers in various departments of the State were mer matriculates and one of the departmental heads, a Dogr Rajput, was not even literate as he used to sign the offici documents with his thumb impression.

In summer of 1929 A.C., a representation had been mad to the Maharaja by a few moderate Muslim politicians about the inadequate representation of their community in the Stat services. A private understanding was arrived at that about 50 per cent vacancies should be reserved for the Muslims. Th assurance was never implemented with the result that resent ment grew day by day.

The educated young men began to organise themselves They formed a party informally because there existed no free dom of association. They opened a reading room in Srinagar where lengthy discussions were held among members of the party as to how they should get their grievances redressed. All members of the party were young and inexperienced. Hardly could any one of them imagine that the role which forces beyond their control were making them play had a great his torical significance. They were anxious to secure suitable and honourable places in State services. Beyond that limited goal their ambitions or aspirations did not proceed. A revolu tion or even a drastic change in the political, economic and social structure of the county was beyond their imagination and expectation. Yet, as subsequent events proved, however unwillingly or hesitatingly they were forced to be the weapons in the hands of times which had ripened for changes and developments unprecedented in the history of the Dogra rule.

After a good deal of deliberation the young men decided

to approach the State Cabinet which was governing the country in absence of the Maharaja who had gone to London to attend the Round Table Conference. A deputation of two members was selected to meet the Ministers who condescended to grant an interview. One of the members was Sheikh Abdullah on whose shoulders thus the mantle of leadership fell at an early stage of the movement.

The outcome of the interview was disappointing. The Cabinet refused to reserve jobs for the Muslims if they could not get them through competition with the candidates of other communities. This discouragement could have been sufficient to break the back-bone of the Muslim young men and nip the movement in the bud as it had done on many previous occasions in case of Pandit young men but the times had changed. The Muslim young men might lack the courage to take up the struggle but forces working in the country would not let them sleep.

The disaffection among all sections of Kashmir people was growing and had indeed reached the highest pitch. The Punjab Muslims of different shades of opinion such as Ahrars and Ahmadis, were doing enormous propaganda against the Dogra rule. The Maharaja had flamboyantly delivered pro-Congress speeches at the Round Table Conference enraging his imperialist masters. Forgetting his position as a vassal he had also been rather haughty towards the British Resident ever since he ascended the throne. The whole atmosphere was surcharged; only a match was needed to be applied to the gun-powder to explode. This was unconsciously done by the Muslim young men soon after their moderate demands had been turned down by the State Cabinet.

It was clear to everybody that something was going to happen soon. No body knew who was driving the public mind but that it was being driven towards something inexpressible appeared to be a certainty. A novel drama was being enacted on a national scale and every Kashmiri was taking part in it, however humbly, however unconsciously; yet every one including the Muslim young men thought that others unknown to

him were more concerned in this affair than he. It was
amazing, almost mystical, terrorising and shuddering experien
It was an elemental upsurge.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ELEMENTAL UPSURGE

I have already noted the unfortunate and narrow-minded attitude of the Pandit government employees towards the educated Muslim young men. That was one of the main causes which had given a communal bias to the tone and temper of the propaganda which the young men were carrying on in their limited circle. The surcharged atmosphere now prevailing in the country unbalanced the Pandit community. They became suspicious, terror-stricken and demoralised. Despite their glorious part in the Freedom Movement throughout the course of the history and their manifold grievances against the Dogra rule, nothing to say of their demand for freedom of Press and establishment of Constitutional Government, they now began to look upon the Maharaja as their protector and refuge. They became the defenders of the powers that were and thus came into clash with the dynamic times. It is a tragedy that even up to this day the majority of the Pandits have continued to maintain such an unhealthy and dangerous attitude towards the Freedom Movement.

In the beginning of 1931 A.C. the Lahore Muslim Press started a violent and venomous campaign against the Hindu Maharaja and his administration. Newspapers containing articles written in words of fire were published and sent by thousands into the State. In the name of the Holy Prophet and Islam, the followers of the Faith were asked to sacrifice everything for the cause of the community and join the struggle which it was evident to everyone was coming with great speed. This campaign under the circumstances already mentioned created terrific effects upon the minds of the Muslims in the Valley.

Under the stress of the times people in the State had become very active. Groups, bands and parties were formed

everywhere without the knowledge of each other. In Srina the Reading Room Party was gradually forced to the forefr in the Muslim politics. They had the good fortune to en the sympathies and even active co-operation of the two re gious heads, the *Mir Waizes*, for their agitation. Amo Pandits the *Yuvak Sabha*, a religious organisation jumped in politics. Prem Nath Bazaz was chosen as its President.

A few incidents occurred in different parts of the State consequential in themselves, but quite dangerous in the poli cal climate which now existed in the land. There was a case Jammu of disrespect to the Holy Quran and another case interference in the *Khutba* of a *Maulvi* on *ID* day. A thi incident took place in village Digore when Muslims were refuse permission to offer prayers on a certain piece of land. Thoug prompt action was taken by the authorities to set the matte right nothing pleased the Muslims and a cry of "Islam in da ger" was raised throughout the length and breadth of the lan This made the movement State-wide.

Big gatherings of the Muslims began to be held at di ferent religious places particularly in the Jama Masjid, at Sr nagar, in which speeches condemning the Hindu governmen and its officials were delivered by all those who could use th tongue on a platform. One such public meeting was called in the Khanqah-i-Maula on 21st June, 1931, to elect the repre sentatives of the Kashmir Muslims who were expected t submit the grievances and demands of the community to th Maharaja at the suggestion of G.E.C. Wakefield, Political Minister. Jammu Muslims had already elected their fou representatives among whom Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas was one. The Muslims of Srinagar nominated seven prominent workers as their spokesmen. They were Khwaja Saad-ud-Din Shawl, Mir Waiz Usuf Shah, Mir Waiz Atiq Ullah Hamadani, Aga Sayyid Hussain Shah Jalali, Khwaja Ghulam Ahmad Ashai, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah and Munshi Shahab-ud-Din.

At the end of the Khanqah-i-Maula meeting, an outsider Muslim Abdul Qadir, an ugly-looking, short-statured butler of an European, delivered a violent speech advocating massacre

of Hindus. He was arrested by the Police next day and ordered to be tried in the central jail. On 13th July before the trial started, a large crowd gathered outside the prison walls. When the Sessions Judge and other officials arrived the mob became uncontrollable and some of the Muslims forced their way into the outer compound of the jail. The District Magistrate, who had also come by this time, ordered the arrest of some of the ring-leaders of the mob. Out of all the officials present–and their number was large–not even one went forward to the crowd to reason with it and pacify it. The Official Enquiry Commission which investigated into the affair subsequently have deplored this attitude of the officials and recorded their opinion that "the crowd ought at least to have been told by the District Magistrate that it was a criminal gathering and ran the great risk of a clash with the authority". The arrests highly excited the crowd who demanded the release of their leaders and not obtaining it became restive and threw stones. Telephone lines were furiously shaken and subsequently cut. Attempts were made to set fire to the Police Lines attached to the jail and their contents were thrown out. At this stage firing was ordered. According to the official report ten men were killed at the spot and several wounded. But it was found on the 26th July that actually twenty-one persons died in all as a result of the incident.

After the firing the matters took a very grave turn. The officials became greatly nervous but could not leave the jail premises. A large part of the crowd carried the dead bodies on *charpoys* and went towards the city in the form of a procession. They carried a banner of blood in front and raised slogans. Public opinion among the Muslims had by this time crystallised on the point that the government and the Hindus were inseparable and the one stood for the other. Almost all the officials were Hindus and the Maharaja was a Hindu. So the responsibility for the actions of the government must be shared by the Hindus. The jail firing which killed several Muslims created great resentment in the mob mind against the Hindus. So when the procession reached Maharaj Ganj, a busy trade centre of

the city, Hindu shops which had been closed owing to pani after hearing of the jail incident, were broken open and looted A serious rioting followed not only at Maharaj Ganj but also i several parts of the city, notably Vicharnag and Naushehra, th city of Bud Shah. Hundreds of Hindu houses and shops wer denuded of their contents and the inmates badly handled. Thre Hindus were murdered and 163 wounded. The rioters held th northern part of the city for three hours until the Military cam and occupied it. Firing was again resorted to that afternoo at Nawab Bazar where one man was killed. Over 300 riotet were arrested, out of whom about 217 were subsequently release for want of sufficient evidence against them.

Historically and politically the 13th July, 1931, is the mos important day in the annals of contemporary Kashmir. From this day the struggle for independence and freedom in the most modern sense started openly. Doubtless in 1931, the struggle was aggressively communal outwardly but those who had not kept their eyes shut could see that it was in essence the struggle of a victimised and enslaved people against the despo tic rule. It was sooner or later bound to proceed on the right track. Prem Nath Bazaz and a number of Kashmiri Pandits soon realized that the movement was spontaneous and express ed the inner urge of the down-trodden, tyrannised and sup pressed millions under the autocratic alien Dogra rule. They also realized that it would be suicidal to oppose it and instead of showing any hostility towards it, it was the paramount duty of all patriots to support it, nay contribute their humble share to make it successful. Undoubtedly the progressive Pandits felt deeply pained and grieved to see that contrary to the traditions and culture of Kashmir, the movement was conducted on narrow communal basis as had never been done before in any period of their long history. They also realized that it must be quickly re-orientated on healthier and secular lines on which composite Kashmir culture had been reared during many centuries in the past. But here too the Pandit patriots were of the opinion that it was useless and unfair to lay the blame entirely on the shoulders of the Muslims. They held the

view that Kashmir Hindus were equally responsible for the emergence of communalism as a strong factor in body politic of the State. They therefore decided to attempt to drastically change the attitude of the Pandit community and meanwhile to become critical supporters of the freedom movement started by the Muslims. They believed such a policy would produce favourable reactions in the Muslim mind. With this viewpoint the progressive Pandits started the uphill task of secularising Kashmir politics with what results the remaining part of this book will tell.

The incident of the 13th July shook the whole State including the Administration ; it unnerved the Maharaja. An official commission under the presidentship of Sir Barjore Dalal, Chief Justice, was set up to enquire into the causes of the happenings. The enquiry was boycotted by the Muslims.

Immediately after the jail incident, most of the chosen representatives of the State Muslims including Abdullah and Abbas were arrested and kept in Hari Parbat Fort. It proved no remedy to restore law and order in the State. As a matter of fact it added fuel to the fire of wild excitement which held the people in its grip. As it was, 13th July saw the beginning of the gigantic force behind the mass movement.

The country from one end to the other was now a big mass of discontent and unrest. Law and order remained only in name and the instructions of the authorities were publicly flouted at every place. Complete and spontaneous *hartal* was observed by the Muslim shopkeepers throughout the Kashmir Province. The few Hindu shops also remained closed owing to the fear of loot. Innumerable mass meetings were held to protest against the policy of the government particularly the arrest of the leaders. Big processions were taken out and demonstrations held in all towns and important villages in which men, women and children participated in large numbers. The situation became explosive and dangerous.

Finding that the Cabinet was unable to grapple with the political problem, the Maharaja discharged two of his ministers, G.E.C. Wakefield and P.K. Wattal, and installed a Hindu

Jagirdar, Raja Hari Kishen Kaul, as his Prime Minister. The new Premier realized before he was in office for many days that he could not restore normal conditions unless and until he released the Muslim leaders interned in Hari Parbat Fort. The leaders were set at liberty by the end of July on furnishing an undertaking that they would not deliver any speeches which might create communal bitterness.

The successful termination of the movement which resulted in the release of its leaders gave a great fillip to the activities of the Muslims. It strengthened the agitation against the Dogra Government. The representatives chosen some days before the 13th July became the confirmed and recognised leaders of the Muslims in the State.

Because of its communal colour the Freedom Movement of the Kashmir people remained for a long time under the direction and virtual control of the Punjab Muslim leaders who had formed a small body known as "Kashmir Committee" to advise those at the helm of affairs in the State. Under instructions of this Committee, August 14 was observed by Muslims throughout India as "Kashmir Day" when meetings were held and resolutions passed sympathising with the victims of the firings of 13th July. The "Kashmir Day" was observed inside the State as well on a big scale. Through the intercession of one Punjabi Muslim leader, Nawab Mehr Shah, His Highness instructed his government to enter into an agreement with the representatives who had been chosen by the Muslims in the beginning of July. It was done to mollify the majority community and to find a *modus operandi* in Kashmir politics when its old basis had been altogether shattered by the elemental upsurge. This agreement was called Temporary Truce. According to it the Muslims undertook to stop the agitation, deliver no speeches against the government and any class of people and remain loyal to the Maharaja. The Government on their behalf undertook to suspend all measures adopted for suppression of this agitation. This truce was wholly unacceptable to the people because it did not touch any of the basic political, economic or social problems. When the provisions of the agreement were announ-

ced on 28th August in a mass meeting at Jama Masjid, Muslims raised cat calls and denounced the truce. The leaders naturally became uneasy and wanted under one pretext or another to come into clash with the authorities. Now and then they delivered speeches which were objectionable in law. As a consequence some of the leaders, including Abdullah, were arrested on the 24th of September. Almost immediately on hearing the news Kashmiris rose in rebellion like the proverbial one man. Next day it became evident that the situation had become grave. Thousands of people had collected at Jama Masjid who, on being asked to disperse, became violent. The police fired at them killing three and wounding several.

The 24th of September, 1931, is another important day in the history of Kashmir. On this day, in spite of their leaders, the masses asserted themselves. They, in spite of their leaders again, proved that the struggle was political and non-communal and directed entirely against the administration of the State and was in no manner against non-Muslims. Large crowds of Muslims with all kinds of crude weapons particularly the one known in Kashmiri as *narchu* in their hands paraded the streets brandishing their arms. There is evidence to believe that thousands of people came from the countryside to participate in these demonstrations. According to the official report it was impossible for any policeman to go out into the streets. Throughout the city the policemen remained inside their quarters and police control was for the time being entirely suspended. It is highly significant that not a single Hindu–man, woman or child–was molested by the mob on this day. On the other hand, there is reliable evidence to show that members of the mob furnished instances of great chivalry and real heroism in escorting some Hindu women. Muslims voluntarily accompanied the women to their homes. Even though misguided by the upper classes, the Muslim fighters for freedom instinctively followed the age-old traditions of their noble culture. Evidently the masses had not lost sight of their goal. They were giving a demonstration of their strength and pointing to their real ambitions and aspirations. I do not believe that this demonstration had been planned by

the Muslim leaders. It was spontaneous. It was a protest simultaneously against the unwanted, tyrannical and despotic Dogra rule as well as against the selfish, bourgeoisie leadership. While the Hindu upper classes thought that this gigantic and terrible demonstration was the work of the Muslim upper classes, the latter were themselves frightfully taken aback on finding the magnitude of the demonstration. Muslim leaders hurriedly held a meeting at the residence of Saad-ud-Din Shawl, one of the representatives, and five or six of them applied for an interview with His Highness, which was granted. They dissociated all the representatives from the gigantic demonstration and explained their position before their august sovereign. So long as the Muslim masses were under the control of the bourgeoisie leadership and faithfully carried out their behests, the leaders used them to bring pressure upon the monarchy; but when the people acted spontaneously and in their own interests, the leadership sought refuge in royalty. This was another effect of the class mentality, and proof enough that the leadership was afraid of leading the masses.

As a direct consequence of the treachery of the leadership, on 24th September, the Maharaja passed an ordinance on the lines of the ordinance which had been promulgated in Burma to put down an organised and armed rebellion in that country. The city was handed over to the military control and the civil administration was suspended. We need not go into the atrocities of the Dogra Military. Suffice it to say that they misbehaved themselves in every conceivable manner. When the details of atrocities reached other places in the Valley there was restlessness everywhere. Fire had to be opened in Anantnag town killing twenty-one people and injuring twenty-seven. Some of those killed were of less than ten years of age. In Shopian matters became even worse and the town was handed over to the military control with the inevitable results. "I have nothing but condemnation to record regarding the facts that the people were forced to stand up and shout slogans on occasions when the police and troops passed by and in many cases they were beaten if they delayed in doing so", observed Mr. Middleton who

was appointed by the Maharaja to report on the disturbances.

Despite severe repression the Muslims continued to struggle and the Maharaja, realising that the resistance was strong, thought it advisable to change his policy. So on the 5th October, 1931, he issued a proclamation withdrawing the ordinance and other emergency measures. All political prisoners were also released forthwith.

As a result of the events in Kashmir Province, unrest in Jammu was simmering for a considerable time. The Muslims of Jammu are nearer to Punjab Muslims than the Muslims of the Valley. To demonstrate their sympathies with State Muslims, the Ahrars sent *jathas* of volunteers to Jammu with the intention of creating disturbances and disaffection against the government. Nearly 4500 such volunteers entered the State boundaries in the month of October. Encouraged by their presence, Jammu Muslims started political demonstrations. It became difficult for the State Government to deal with the situation and the Maharaja requested the Viceroy for help. On 4th November the British troops arrived in Jammu from Jullundur cantonment which effectively suppressed the local disturbances there.

But now the unrest spread to the Mirpur district. It assumed a menacing communal-cum-economic shape. It was a war of Muslim peasantry against the Hindu money-lenders. Whole villages were burnt down and entire buildings razed to the ground in the greater part of the tehsils of Mirpur, Kotli and Rajouri. Economic and religious factors played equal parts in this disturbance and for the time being it was difficult to separate them. British troops were at once despatched to the disturbed areas but due to bad roads it took much time to quell lawlessness.

In his proclamation on 5th October the Maharaja gave an assurance that "if any section of my subjects desires to submit any reasonable request, they will receive my sympathetic consideration". Accordingly, memorials were submitted immediately by the representatives of the Muslims, Hindus of all shades of opinion, Sikhs, Rajputs, and Kashmiri Pandits in which

various grievances particular to individual communities a also those they had as citizens of the State were laid down

In their memorials the non-Muslims generally stressed th need for protection of life and property and of good and stro government. Sikhs wanted "thirty-three per cent share in se vices, a minister in the Cabinet and one-third of the posts fro highest to the lowest". The Kashmiri Pandits demanded "fair fie and no favour in matter of grant of services; the doors of milit ry services should be thrown open to them and employment shou be provided for their educated unemployed". The Kashm Pandits further observed that "they were as anxious as any oth community for the introduction of Constitutional Governmen but they were equally anxious that the body politic should n be corrupted by the canker of communalism". The memorial Rajputs was more a sermon on resolute government than a reque

The memorial submitted by the Muslims was an elabora document. In it the representatives of the community to the Maharaja that "no single man without the help and co operation of others could look after the welfare of a va territory like Jammu and Kashmir and the people could n enjoy peace and prosperity unless they were afforded suitab opportunity to influence and criticise the work of the exec tive responsible for the observance of such laws". So was necessary that "an immediate assurance be given to th people to the effect that in future they would be treate in accordance with some definite constitution and a declaratio may be immediately made that your Highness' Governmen will be based on constitutional principles". An attempt wa made in this memorial even to visualise this constitution an according to it "every citizen of the State should be eligible fo election to the Assembly. Seventy per cent members should be elected, Ministers should be responsible to the Ruler, but i seventy per cent of the members of the Legislature pass a resolution to the effect that they have no confidence in a certain Minister, that Minister should be forthwith relieved o his duty". Of course the Muslims wanted the strength of the population to be reflected in the numerical strength of the

Assembly as well as the Ministry. The memorialists demanded a declaration of fundamental rights which would guarantee "perfect religious freedom, freedom of assemblage, freedom of speech, freedom of Press, and equality of rights and treatment for all State subjects in all respects". In the matter of recruitment to State services, the Muslims demanded that "seventy per cent of these should be given to them in all grades, and the basis of recruitment should be the minimum qualifications".

On 12th November 1931, the Maharaja appointed a commission consisting of four non-official members presided over by an European officer, B. J. Glancy of the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India. The four non-official members were made up of G. A. Ashai, one Muslim and Prem Nath Bazaz, one Hindu, from the Kashmir Province, and Ghulam Abbas, one Muslim, and Lok Nath Sharma, one Hindu, from the Jammu Province each nominated by their respective communities. The function of the Commission was "to enquire into and report on the various complaints of a religious or a general nature contained in the memorials" and "also such complaints as might be directly laid before the Commission".

Reactionary and short-sighted Hindus disapproved and disliked the appointment of the Commission because they thought that it indicated that the Muslim movement was strong and irrestible. They brought heavy pressure to bear upon the Hindu members to resign in the hope that without their participation the Commission would not be able to function. Unhappily Lok Nath Sharma surrendered before these powerful forces of reaction but Prem Nath Bazaz would not yield. The latter was firmly of the opinion that here was a chance for the liberal and far-sighted Hindus to influence the Muslim movement and divert it to the right channels and bring it on a saner path. He therefore refused to respond to the clamour and fully and frankly participated in the deliberations of the Commission till the very last day. This created a well marked rift in the ranks of the Kashmiri Pandit political workers. All the reactionary and communal-minded Pandits have ever since arrayed on one side under *The Yuvak Sabha* (also called

Kashmiri Pandits' Conference) to oppose the legitimate aspi
tions of the Muslims ; on the other side has been the band
workers who agree with Prem Nath Bazaz that the progr
and prosperity of Kashmiri Pandits is synonymous with t
complete political, social and economic freedom of Kashmir a
the liberation of the Muslim masses.

The report of the Grievances Enquiry (Glancy) Co
mission was published in April, 1932. It is a document of gre
historical importance, as it established beyond doubt that re
grievances existed which needed redress. The main recom
mendations of the Commission were readily accepted by H
Highness. According to these all religious buildings of th
Muslims in possession of the Government were restored to them
the Hindu Law of Inheritance was allowed to remain as it wa
found by the Commission that no religious grievance of th
Muslims could be admitted on this account. It recommende
that the educational development should be strenuously taken i
hand especially in regard to primary schools. An increase i
the number of Muslim teachers and the appointment of a
Special Officer for supervising and promoting Muslim educatio
was also recommended. In the matter of distribution o
government services the following recommendations wer
made :

(a) Minimum qualifications should not be pitched unnecessarily high.
(b) All vacancies should be effectively advertised and similar action
should be taken as regards all scholarships intended to provide equip
ment in government services.
(c) Effective measures should be taken to provide a system of ap
pointment and a machinery for supervising that system in such a way a
to prevent the due interests of any community from being neg
lected.

Dealing with land problem the Commission observed :

"Proprietary rights should be granted in all respects to all lands of
which the ownership is retained by the State and right of occupancy
is enjoyed by the private persons. The grant of proprietary rights
would be greatly appreciated and would make for increased contentment
and stability".

The poor peasant and his immediate problems also were
not totally ignored. Said the Commission :

"*Kahcharai* (Grazing Tax) should be forthwith suspended in certain

specified areas, and action should be taken to see that the demand
does not press too heavily on other portions of the State. All possible
care should be taken to see that the existing rights of the agriculturists
are not in any way impaired by privileges conferred on other classes.
The benefit of concession granted to the agriculturists at the time of
Raj Tilak ceremony (His Highness' accession) should be fully secured
to them. Strenuous endeavours should be made to put an end to all
unauthorised exactions. Decentralisation of power is desirable in many
directions in order that Ministers and Heads of Departments may have
time to supervise more effectively the officers under their control".

As regards *begar*, which was still practised by officials, the Commission recommended :

"His Highness' orders in respect of *Kar-i-Sarkar* (Labour requisitioned for State purposes) should be strictly enforced and payment should be made at proper rates for all services rendered".

And lastly about unemployment and industrialisation the Commission said :

"The promotion of industries should receive the earliest attention of the State authorities. Industrial developments are at the present time of the utmost importance as it is highly desirable to provide an outlet for employment".

CHAPTER EIGHT

ATTEMPTS TO SECULARISE POLITICS

WITH the publication of the report of the Grievances Enquiry Commission as well as of other reports by B.J. Glancy which he submitted to the Maharaja in May 1932, regarding the constitutional reforms and freedom of Press and Platform, it became widely known that all State Hindus did not oppose the Muslim demands and that at least a section of the Kashmiri Pandits whom Prem Nath Bazaz represented were anxious to see that the legitimate grievances of the State Muslims are redressed and a progressive form of government is established in the State. This created a moderating and sobering influence on the Muslim mind. A few young Muslim leaders including Abdullah began to think of re-orientating the Muslim politics on broader, healthier and non-communal lines. Abdullah and Prem Nath Bazaz met only two months later on a historic afternoon in July 1932 in the Chashma Shahi Garden to thrash out the problem. This meeting proved to be of a great significance. The decisions taken in it by the two after a frank, detailed and heart-to-heart discussion of the basic issues, have considerably influenced the State politics. It was in this meeting that Abdullah and Bazaz firmly resolved that the Kashmir Freedom Movement will be conducted on secular, progressive and democratic lines. Both of them promised to work together till the goal of complete freedom was achieved.

After the Chashma Shahi meeting Abdullah and Bazaz met frequently to review progress of their mission during the succeeding months. Meanwhile unfavourable wind began to blow in the State. The reactionary Hindus considered the various Glancy Reports as a challenge to their stranglehold in State politics. They could easily see that their vested interests were being demolished and if the process was allowed to continue before long there would be a popular government in the country which in other words would mean the rule of the Muslims — the majority community in the State. These reactionaries therefore tried their best to frighten the Government so that it might desist from becoming just towards the Muslims. Public meetings were held in which irresponsible and provocative speeches were delivered by Hindu leaders. This caused a riot in Srinagar during October and passions ran very high. It was surely not a suitable climate for introducing secular politics in the country. Though therefore the implementation of the proposals drawn in the Chashma Shahi Garden was postponed indefinitely, Abdullah and Prem Nath Bazaz continued to keep in close touch with each other.

By now it was evident that the Muslims needed an organisation to constitutionally fight for a representative government and to safeguard their communal interests. Accordingly the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference was founded and its first session was held in Srinagar on the 15th, 16th and 17th October 1932. This Conference remained in existence till June 1939. Its history is nothing but the record of the struggle of the middle and upper class Muslims for the achievement of their class rights.

On the last day of October 1932, Prem Nath Bazaz started the first newspaper, *The Daily Vitasta*, in the Kashmir Province to popularise the ideal of secular politics and fight for the establishment of a responsible government in the State. This journal did not live long mainly owing to the hostility of the reactionary Hindus who tried to suppress it by every means at their command. Nevertheless the daily rendered great service to the cause of Nationalism during those early days of the Freedom Movement. Influenced by the writings of progressive Pandit intellectuals, published in the columns of *The Vitasta*, the Working Committee of the Muslim Conference constituted a sub-committee early in 1933 to find out ways and means of uniting Hindus and Muslims. This sub-committee could not function but it indicates that the idea of joint action in politics had taken birth.

An agitation was started by the Muslim Conference lead in winter 1934 on the basis of complaints that the governm had inordinately delayed implementation of the constitutio reforms proposed by B.J. Glancy in his report and that the Mu lims were not given adequate representation in State servic The Working Committee suspended the Constitution of t Conference and appointed Ghulam Abbas as "Dictator" with purpose of either getting the grievances of Muslims redress by correspondence with the Government or by launching movement of civil disobedience. Abbas prepared his mem randum to the Government in consultation with Abdullah a Bazaz. It is noteworthy that while discussing the constitution reforms for the State in the memorandum, Ghulam Abb demanded that there should be a system of joint electorates fo the proposed Legislative Assembly, a thing which has alwa been hateful to Muslim communalists.

The Government did not favourably consider the propos put forward by the "Dictator" in his memorandum. Abbas to acted in haste by challenging the authorities either to acce his demands or suffer consequences. A clash became inevitabl He was arrested and many others with him but not Abdullah

While Abbas and others were behind the bars, the Maha raja granted a Constitution providing a Legislative Assembly for the people. The first session of the Assembly was held in au tumn of 1934 at Srinagar. High hopes were raised with the intro duction of this reform but the reality soon dawned upon the peo ple that the Assembly was powerless. Nevertheless it served a good purpose in that the elected representatives of Muslims and Hindus were brought together on the floor of the House where they began to understand and appreciate each other's point of view. They also began to realize that most of the basic problems were common to both. Astonishment descended upon an unex pectant outside world when it read in newspapers in autumn 1936 that the entire block of the elected members, with the solitary exception of one Amar Nath Kak, walked out of the Kashmir Assembly as a protest against the unsympathetic attitude which

was persistently maintained by the government towards the public demands.

Early in 1935 Abdullah and Prem Nath Bazaz felt that the time had arrived to make the first move in the implementation of their scheme for re-orientating Kashmir politics on secular lines. They were however cautious not to precipitate the matters. On 1st August, 1935, they jointly started a weekly journal *The Hamdard* in Urdu to popularise the ideology and to lay the foundation of progressive Nationalism in the State. The inauguration of the first issue of the journal was performed by Dr. Saif-ud-Din Kitchlew in a big public meeting at Hazuri Bagh, Srinagar. From the very start *The Hamdard* attempted to blaze a new trail in the affairs of the State. It was a standard-bearer of democracy and unity of all Kashmiris without any consideration of caste or creed they professed. Often it published articles bitterly and frankly critical of orthodox views. Its readers came from all classes and communities. In a country where all other papers were either thoroughly Muslim or totally Hindu in their outlook *The Hamdard* stood alone, a class by itself. It was mainly through the sober, thoughtful and inspiring writings of this weekly that the Muslim Conference was converted into the National Conference in 1939 A. C.

On 8th May 1936 the Muslim Conference Party observed a Responsible Government Day throughout the length and breadth of the State. An appeal had been made by Abdullah, President of the Conference, to non-Muslims to participate in the function. This did not go in vain. For, at many places, notably Srinagar, Poonch and Jammu, presidents of the public meetings held in this connection as also the principal speakers at them were either Hindus or Sikhs.

A party of young men with some influence and under the guidance of Prem Nath Bazaz came into existence in 1936 in the form of Kashmir Youth League which believed "in the equality of all people in the State" and held that "there was no distinction between young men or women on the basis of religious beliefs they professed". Such activities and developments proved

conducive and helpful to the growth of secular politics and enabled the leaders of the Muslim Conference to advocate the re-orientation of their party on more rationalist basis.

In his Presidential Address to the sixth annual session of the Muslim Conference on the 26th March, 1938, Abdullah observed:

> "Like us the large majority of Hindus and Sikhs in the State have immensely suffered at the hands of the irresponsible government. They are also steeped in deep ignorance, have to pay large taxes and are in debt and starving. Establishment of responsible government is as much a necessity for them as for us. Sooner or later these people are bound to join our ranks. No amount of propaganda can keep them away from us".

Again:

> "The main problem therefore now before us is to organise joint action and a united front against the forces that stand in our way in the achievement of our goal. This will require re-christening our organisation as a non-communal political body and introducing certain amendments in its constitution and its rules".

He added:

> "I reiterate today what I have said so often. Firstly, we must end communalism by ceasing to think in terms of Muslims and non-Muslims when discussing our political problems. Secondly there must be universal suffrage on the basis of joint electorates. Without these two, democracy is lifeless".

Mark an admission :—

> "You complain that the Hindus belonging to the vested interests are reactionary and stand in the way of our progress. But have we not had the same experience in the case of capitalist Muslims also? It is significant as well as hopeful that in spite of many difficulties in their way some non-Muslims have co-operated with us though their number is very small. Their sincerity and moral courage make us feel their strength. We must therefore open our doors to all such Hindus and Sikhs, who like curselves, believe in the freedom of their country from the shackles of an irresponsible rule".

Abdullah placed a resolution embodying his views before the Working Committee on 28 June 1938. There was an opposition from some members including Ghulam Mohammed Bakshi and Mohammed Afzal Beg. But after a heated discussion for about fifty-two hours, the Committee adopted the resolution. It said:

> "Whereas in the opinion of the Working Committee the time has now come when all the progressive forces in the country should be rallied under one banner to fight for the achievement of responsible government, the Working Committee recommends to the General Council that in the forthcoming session of the Conference the name and constitution of the organization be so altered and amended that all such people who desire to participate in this political struggle may easily become members of the Conference irrespective of their caste, creed or religion".

It appears that the Dogra Government headed by N. Gopalaswami Ayyengar, who had been the Prime Minister of the State since 1936, felt uneasy at this new trend of affairs in the politics of the State. The authorities began to give pin-pricks to the people by gagging prominent workers and by imposing other restrictions on their activities. Early in August it became evident that a conflict between the people and the Government was in the offing. It seemed doubtful if the Muslim Conference would be allowed to hold its plenary session to ratify the resolution passed by the Working Committee to change the name and the constitution of the organisation. A manifesto was therefore prepared and published on the 29th August under the signatures of twelve prominent Hindu, Muslim and Sikh leaders of the national bent of mind.

We need not discuss the contents of this manifesto known as the "National Demand" in detail. Its significance lies in the fact that the signatories had made a declaration that the movement was nation-wide and not confined to any community or section of the public and that "all classes of the people had begun participating in it with the fullest consciousness of the issues it involves". The ultimate goal of the movement according to these leaders was "to bring about complete change in the social and political outlook of the people and to achieve responsible government under the aegis of the Maharaja". These sentiments showed a remarkable change that had taken place in the minds of the people of Kashmir, at any rate, among a large section of the political workers. For that reason the struggle that followed was unique and unparalleled in the contemporary political history of Kashmir. The Freedom Movement had come out of

the mire of communalism and was shining in all its brilli
on the high pedestal of Nationalism.

The adoption and the publication of the manifesto pro
to be a signal for measuring the swords between the figh
for Kashmir's freedom on the one side and the alien and au
cratic Dogra Rule on the other. The fight started on the
day of August. The policy of severest repression was launch
by the Government. Hundreds of leaders and workers w
arrested including Abdullah, Abbas and Bazaz. Many Kashm
Pandits fought shoulder to shoulder with Muslims and suffe
equally with them. It was a glorious chapter in the hist
of the Freedom Movement of Kashmir.

Repression only strengthened the forces of nationali
in the State. Realising this, N. Gopalaswami Ayyengar releas
all imprisoned leaders and workers including the signator
to the National Demand by the end of February 1939.
special session of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conferen
was held at Srinagar on the 10th June of that year. It w
attended by 176 delegates representing all districts. The reso
tion which had been adopted by the Working Committee
the 28th June 1938 was moved in the open session. Some of t
delegates including Abbas privately expressed fears about t
future of the political movement after the change was effecte
They were not sure that the State Hindus would sincerely an
whole-heartedly support the freedom struggle. A meeting wa
held in which Abdullah, Abbas and Bazaz discussed thes
doubts and fears. It was obvious that the large majority of th
State Hindus would prefer Dogra rule to a democratic gover
ment. But that the re-orientation would immensely strengthe
the forces of freedom and enable Hindu and Sikh progressive
and patriots to participate in the struggle was also clear. Mus
lim leaders feared that the National Conference would become
hand-maid of the Indian Congress. But Abdullah, Abbas an
Bazaz solemnly declared that it would be most harmful and
dangerous to bring the Kashmir Freedom Movement under the
influence of any outside organisation. It was decided that the
organisation should keep aloof from the Indian National Cong-

ress as well as the Muslim League. On these assurances mis-
givings of Abbas were allayed and he gave his fullest support to
the resolution in the plenary session of the Conference. "The
garb in the shape of Muslim Conference (for the State politics)
has become outworn and threadbare", declared Ghulam Abbas
in the open session speaking on the resolution and addressing the
delegates. He added: "Now we are in need of a nationalist guise.
The time has come when we should discard the old and decayed
mantle and tear it to pieces". Another top-ranking Muslim
leader from Jammu, Allah Rakha Sagar, spoke in the same
strain by advising the delegates that "Nationalism is the cry of
the time and those who do not heed it, will repent in future".
The resolution was passed, the over-whelming majority of dele-
gates supporting it; only three hands were raised in opposition.
Thus the morning of the 11th June 1939, when the historic
decision was taken after deliberating over it for a whole night,
sounded the death-knell of the Muslim Conference and heralded
the day with the happy news of the birth of the National Con-
ference in its place.

CHAPTER NINE

NATIONAL CONFERENCE LED ASTRAY

THE 11th of June 1939 was a red letter day in the histo of the Freedom Movement in Kashmir. The great desire those who wanted to re-orientate State politics on secula lines had been fulfilled. The tremendous labour of Abdulla and Bazaz since that afternoon in July 1932 when they fir met at the Cheshma Shahi Garden to draw up a plan for Fre dom Movement right up to the very hour when the resolutio was adopted in the Special Session, had borne fruit. Th first milestone in the journey towards the goal of liberatio had been reached. It was now possible to adapt the freedo struggle to the basic principles and traditions of the composi culture of Kashmir Nationalism seeds of which had been sow during the days of Bud Shah and carefully nurtured by a Kashmir patriots throughout the long period of five centurie till the purchase of the Valley by the Dogras. The way ha now been opened to liberate Kashmir from the alien rule a well as to secure economic, political and social freedom of th teeming millions of the land. But the task before the Nationa Conference was a tedious one ; the path was beset with mani fold difficulties. For, it was easier to form the National Confer ence than to make it an effective weapon in the hands of th people for the achievement of the freedom of Kashmir.

The re-christening of the Muslim Conference had taken place at a time when Indian politics were undergoing changes of far-reaching importance. Under the provisions of the Gov ernment of India Act 1935, autonomy had been introduced in British India and Congress Governments had come to power in all the Provinces except the Punjab and Bengal as a result of the general elections held in 1937. Three years of Congress rule had shown that Muslims were not satisfied with it and signs were already discernible that the Muslim intelligentsia

fired with the spirit of Muslim Nationalism were thinking of having a separate organisation of their own to ventilate their grievances against the Congress Raj as well as the British Imperialism. A shrewd and seasoned politician that he was Mohammed Ali Jinnah had given expression to this inner urge of Muslim intellectuals by repeatedly challenging the claim of the Congress leaders to represent the whole of India. In reply to the slogan of the Congress leaders that there were only two parties in the country–Congress and the British–Jinnah had raised the protest that there was a third party as well–the Muslims. By 1939 the separatist movement of Jinnah had caught the imagination of the educated Muslims of India. It was growing day by day and percolating into the Muslim masses. Kashmir being an integral part of the subcontinent the changes outside the State in British India were deeply affecting the political conditions and the mentality of the people inside the State.

In these circumstances, what was the National Conference to do? Would it form alliance with the Congress or with the Muslim League, or would it remain neutral and independent, away from the sphere of influence of both? And lastly even if it would like to do so, could it remain neutral and independent? These were the ticklish questions that faced the leaders of the Conference almost immediately after the birth of the nationalist organisation and it was on their solution that the future of the country solely depended. It is a pity that the questions were never squarely faced and answered. Finding them too intricate and perplexing the leaders left the problems to solve themselves.

The special session of the Muslim Conference which changed the name and the constitution of the organisation, authorised the Working Committee to co-opt a few prominent non-Muslim workers in all elected bodies after they had been duly enrolled as primary members of the Conference, to give the organization the appearance of a nationalist body. Accordingly some Hindu and Sikh public workers were taken in the Working Committee as well as in the General Council. Nearly

all new entrants had worked for years in different communa Hindu and Sikh organisations and had risen to eminenc espousing the cause of obscurantism, reaction and repress By merely joining the National Conference it was difficult them to totally eschew their old mentality and the polit doctrines in support of which they had fought for many ye At best from being Hindu Communalists they could tak big jump and become Hindu Nationalists. Above that t could not rise. Though all of them paid extravagant tributes secularism in season and out of season, that noble creed s existed only in name.

From the outset the non-Muslim members of the Nation Conference set their heart on bringing the Party, the spear he of the Freedom Movement, under the increasing influence the Indian National Congress. They wanted to see this des fulfilled within months and not years. No step was allow by non-Muslim members to be taken and no decision adopte by the Conference unless and until it was strictly in cons nance with the Congress philosophy and practice. Be it t matter of the party constitution, the flag, the national lang age, slogans and in fact any resolution on any imaginab subject, these members raised hue and cry if the Conferen did not follow in the footsteps of the Congress. Th attitude of their new colleagues made the Muslim leader uneasy but helpless. Having become nationalist and no communal at any rate in name, the Conference could not b expected to ally itself with the Muslim League. And only deep insight into the rapid changes then taking place in British Indian politics and their repercussions inside the State, could keep the National Conference away from the Congress. Seemingly its becoming friendly towards the Congress was unexceptionable.

In trying to bring the National Conference under the hegemony of the Congress leaders, the Hindu and the Sikh members were not prompted by any burning desire for freedom or even by the wish to secularise State politics. They only felt happy that by doing so they were helping the cause of Indian Nationalism

which, despite the statements of the Congress leaders to the contrary, was becoming another name for Hindu Nationalism. Clearly it was the prompting of the communal mentality of the Hindus which was cleverly presented in a nationalist secular garb.

The Muslim leaders did not remain unconcerned while their non-Muslim colleagues made these crafty moves. Like the latter they had been accustomed to think, talk and act as unrepentant communalists for eight years. They had triumphantly utilised the services of the slogan "Islam in Danger" against the Hindu Dogra rule. If they had become liberal under force of arguments or by bitter experience and had by their own sweet will opened the doors of the Conference for non-Muslims to enter, they could not allow that generosity to be abused or misused. They would rather re-convert the National Conference into the Muslim Conference than passively witness the Hindu members contriving to make the organisation a branch of the Indian National Congress. Indeed it was revealed only a few months after the formation of the National Conference that Maulvi Mohammed Sayid, General Secretary of the Conference, had actively encouraged behind the scenes a few impulsive Muslim young men to start a Muslim Conference and promised them not only his own help but that of some other Muslim leaders of the National Conference as well but that when the proposal matured he turned a *volte face* owing to the fear of being exposed.

Thus the perspective was quite dreary. The high command of the National Conference was a house divided against itself. While the Hindu members were actively pulling in one direction, the Muslim members were vigorously pulling in theother. At every step strife ensued. It was feared that the National Conference might prove still-born.

To end this tussle within the Conference ranks, a leader gifted with power of imagination and far-sight whose own philosophy of life would be grounded on the firm foundation of rationalism, was needed to guide the errant members of the Working Committee. Abdullah had shown marvellous courage

and consistancy in getting the Muslim Conference changed in the National Conference. His popularity, reputation and prestige were unique and unprecedented at the moment. He could work wonders provided he could maintain the clarity of thought the magnanimity of heart and the boldness in action that he had been exhibiting for a considerable period. But unhappily he became confused. To his intellectual and progressive colleagues that did not entirely come as a surprise. Abdullah is a hater of books and no admirer of intellectual debates and discourses. He shuns the company of the learned and rarely tolerates a man with independent opinions about him. Being utterly ignorant of Kashmir history and the developments in contemporary world of thought and politics, he could not comprehend the forces that had begun to play within the ranks of the National Conference or in broader sphere among different classes and communities living in the State. He therefore adopted an amateurish and dangerous policy of appeasing by turns the Hindus and the Muslims. To him the pith of secularism lies in it and there is nothing beyond. Ever since this policy has remained an inalienable part of Abdullah's politics though implementation of his desires had to be restricted according to the exigencies of the times.

Many educated Muslims heartily disliked the new orientation that the leaders had given to the politics of the State. From June 1938, when the Working Committee of the Muslim Conference had adopted the resolution recommending change in the name and constitution of the Conference, they had looked with grave suspicions and doubts at the activities of the leaders. The educated unemployed Muslim young men who had utilised the Muslim Conference as an instrument to secure government jobs for themselves, also entertained unfounded fears that their hopes were fading out. But since all the prominent Muslim leaders of all shades of opinion including Abdullah, Abbas, Sagar, Bakshi, Beg, Sadiq and Sayid had joined the National Conference it was futile to raise a discordant note. Things appeared on the surface to be moving satisfactorily well and the top-ranking leaders were extremely complacent.

It was the biggest grievance of the State Hindus, both progressives and reactionaries, that the Freedom Movement of the country was conducted by the popular Muslim leaders in the name of religion and on the basis of communalism. This, they averred, made the minorities apprehensive and also made it very difficult for non-Muslims to take due share in the freedom struggle. This was doubtless an irrefutable charge which the Muslim leaders met with an equally serious challenge by changing the name of the Muslim Conference into the National Conference and by throwing its doors open for non-Muslim patriots to come in. It was therefore expected that Hindu publicists and politicians would enthusiastically hail the change and soon after the successful termination of the Special Session, Hindus in large numbers would enrol themselves as primary members of the National Conference. This did not happen. As subsequent events showed, before taking any steps in this direction, the astute upper class Hindus wanted to be sure about the new ideology of the Muslim leaders and the future programme and policy of the National Conference. If, they thought, the new organisation continued to fight for the freedom of the Kashmir people which in other words meant the emancipation of the Muslim masses and the annihilation of the vested interests (including the Dogra Rule) which were mostly held by Hindus, then the change in the name would be immaterial and even dangerous for the Hindus. But if the National Conference furnished proofs of becoming harmless towards exploiters and peaceful in its ways the Hindus would certainly sympathetically consider to swell the ranks of the Conference by joining it as its members. Many of the few Hindu and Sikh leaders who had joined it already conveyed hopeful assurances to their co-religionists outside that the painstaking work they were doing inside the organisation was bound to bear fruit. Not by any design but perhaps unconsciously, some Hindu members of the National Conference were playing the role of fifth columnists by shattering the revolutionary basis of the organisation.

Feeling that his Muslim opponents had been rendered impotent by circumstances, Abdullah started coaxing the

Hindus. Some sort of inferiority complex made him beli
that until an appreciable number of non-Muslims came into
Conference, secularism would remain lame. It appeared be
his imagination to think that an organisation composed enti
of Muslims could also own the principle of secularism
strictly implement it in practice. He thought that after bri
ing a few Hindus within his fold, all that he did would
considered non-communal. He was not to blame; for, that
and to a large extent is the interpretation of secularism in vo
in India. But it proved to be the main cause of the failure of
National Conference. Secularism does not consist in the com
sition of the membership of a party; it consists in the me
outlook and the attitude and approach of the members of
party to all the problems with which the country is faced a
to life in general.

A grand session of the Jammu and Kashmir Natio
Conference was held at Anantnag on 30th and 31st Septem
and 1st October, 1939. The session ratified the document kn
as the National Demand which had been issued by tw
leaders of the State under their own signatures on the 29th
August, 1938. One of the clauses of the demand ran as follo

> "The election of the Legislature shall be made on the basis of joint
> torates; seats should be reserved for the minorities and all safeguards
> weightages should be guaranteed to them in the Constitution for the
> tection of their linguistic, religious, cultural, political and econo
> rights according to the principles enunciated, accepted or acted u
> by the Indian National Congress from time to time. In addition to
> above the religious rights and sentiments of all the communities should
> respected and not interfered with."

The Second World War had started a few weeks bef
the session opened at Anantnag. A resolution was passed
which the Conference "appreciated the intention underly
the statement issued by the Working Committee of the Natio
al Congress about the War and the policy of the British Go
ernment towards the political aspirations of the Indian Natio
It will be observed that both these resolutions drove the Co
ference closer to the Indian National Congress. It is interesti
to record that Chaudhris Abbas and Hamid Ullah and man

other Muslim leaders from Jammu participated in the delibe-
tions of the session but none raised any protest against this
clear trend in the policy of the Conference.

Naturally the non-Muslim members of the Conference
felt jubilant at their first victory which the Anantnag session
proved for them on the whole. They were not far from truth
when they claimed that something more substantial and deeper
than the mere name of the organisation had been changed. These
statements were confirmed by Abdullah when at the close of
the Anantnag session he delivered a series of speeches eulogizing
the Congress on the one hand and condemning the League ideo-
logy on the other. This, however, produced a disastrous effect
on the Muslim public opinion.

A meeting of the Working Committee was held at Mirpur
on 28th of December, 1939, when a resolution was adopted in
which the Committee "strongly resented exclusion of the recog-
nised court language of the State viz Hindustani from the list
of both compulsory and optional subjects prescribed for the
Kashmir Civil Service examinations" and "strongly urged its
inclusion as one of the compulsory subjects, *facility to be given to the candidates to use either Persian or Devanagri script as they like*". On the face of it the resolution was in conformity with the
principles of composite nationalism and unexceptionable. But it
was a departure from the existing position of the official langu-
age in the State, which has been Urdu in Persian script for more
than seventy years. By demanding introduction of Hindustani
in both Persian and Devanagri scripts as a subject for the Kash-
mir Civil Service Gazetted examinations, the Working Commit-
tee was paving the way for replacement of Urdu in Persian
script by Hindustani in both Devanagri and Persian scripts.
This move created a hostile reaction in the Muslim public
opinion not only within the State but also all over the sub-
continent. Prem Nath Bazaz in a private talk beckoned
Abdullah of the possible consequences and advised him not to
hurry up with the resolution as there was no immediate need
of its being adopted. But in pursuance of their aims to bring
the National Conference closer to the Congress, the Hindu

members of the Committee were insistent that the resolution adopted in the meeting. Abdullah yielded and the Committee agreed. Neither Abbas nor Allah Rakha Sagar, members of the Working Committee, were present in the meeting.

Communal-minded and educated Muslims were waiting for this day. They had been demoralised by the overwhelming popularity of the Nationalist forces in the Valley and were discreet to lie low. But when Abdullah's speeches irritated the Muslim mind they saw their chance. All sorts of stories false and true, were sedulously spread among the Muslims about the intentions and the programme of the National Conference. Unfortunately enough the entire Muslim Press became hostile to the nationalist movement and made the situation worse.

At this stage Ghulam Abbas reminded Abdullah of his assurance on the eve of the Special Session that the National Conference would remain aloof from outside politics and the influence of the Congress and the League ideologies but getting no satisfactory reply he resigned from the Conference. With him left most of the Jammu Muslim leaders.

Abdullah realized now that he was losing ground among the Muslims without making a headway among the non-Muslims. Something must be done to retrieve the loss. He hit on an idea. Under the auspices of a Muslim Trust known as Auqaf Committee which the Nationalist Muslim leaders had formed to manage the important religious shrines and their property, he arranged the celebrations of *Id-i-Milad* on the 24th April, 1940. In order to do some propaganda before hand for the success of the celebrations, meetings were held throughout the city on different days for about two weeks. The speeches delivered in these congregations were hardly creditable to Abdullah, the sponsor of Nationalism. In his characteristically demogogic manner he attacked Hindu politics, derided Hindu society and contemptuously referred to Hindu religion. In one of these public utterances he made an unwise remark that Islam was the sun and other religions were stars, implying thereby that when the sun appeared stars could not be seen. This displeased and embarrassed his Hindu colleagues. Subse-

quently on 28th April, Abdullah was questioned by these members in the meeting of the Working Committee. Exception was taken to his remarks about the comparative greatness of Islam. In an angry reply Abdullah remarked that what he had said was correct and he would repeat it because he was "Muslim first and Muslim last" in every thing he did. Hot words were uttered on both sides which ended the meeting in bitterness. Next day passions ran high again in another meeting over a misunderstanding. This unhappy episode ended in the resignation of Jia Lal Kilam and Kashyap Bandhu, two leading Kashmiri Pandit members of the party.

It was not surprising that Abdullah felt extremely disheartened at these developments. But he did not allow the dismay to overwhelm him and he did not take the defeat lying down. However instead of critically analysing the basic causes of his misfortune he again resorted to his novel method. He invited Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru to be a guest of the National Conference while he was contemplating to visit the Valley in May that year. Abdullah did this in anticipation of the consent of his colleagues. Nehru's tour of the State was a tremendous demonstration of public enthusiasm particularly among the Hindus in which the adverse effects of the resignations of the two Kashmiri Pandit members were drowned. It also rehabilitated the lost position and prestige of the National Conference among the Hindus to a considerable extent.

Pandit Jawahar Lal's visit proved a turning point in the political career of Abdullah as well as in the history of Freedom Movement. A reception committee had been formed of which Prem Nath Bazaz and Ghulam Mohammed Sadiq were the Secretaries, but all the work in connection with the Congress leader's visit was solely conducted by either Abdullah or Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed. The grand reception contemplated needed funds but not a farthing was contributed by the Muslims. The Hindus particularly the prosperous Punjabi traders supplied funds generously, even lavishly. Within a few days no less than twenty-five thousand rupees came in, a sum never collec-

ted so speedily from the people at a time in the one decade history of the Kashmir Movement.

Pandit Nehru toured the different parts of the Valley ten days. His speeches, his interviews and his activities in gen received the widest publicity in the Press outside the St Leading Congress journals had sent special representatives cover the tour. For the first time in his life Abdullah and National Conference came into limelight and got publicity only all over the subcontinent of India but even beyond its sho

These two events opened the eyes of Abdullah as to w Congressmen could do for him if he could in any way en their sympathies for his cause. For nearly ten years he h been ceaselessly toiling for the liberation of the State Muslim He had been the beloved hero of the community. But he h neither secured funds so readily or so liberally nor did he g such wide publicity in the outside Press as he did by associati with Nehru. Sheikh Abdullah's dormant ambitions for fa and power were aroused. He decided to go the whole hog wi the Congress.

Thus came the golden opportunity for Hindus to exploi But the State minorities were divided among themselves. De pite the best efforts of some well-meaning public workers unli Muslims, the State minorities comprising Dogras, Kashmi Pandits, Sikhs, Buddhists and Harijans have never united t formulate common demands. They did never have a towerin personality to bring them all under one banner. The Dogra and the Pandits have for good reasons particularly been suspi- cious of each other. The Dogras were the favourite children of the Maharaja, his own kith and kin. But valley Hindus were treated differently. "Kashmiri Pandits who are a highly educated community and represent the intellectual class are, in a sense, depressed because they get no opportunity of rising in government service or in any other field of useful activity such as industry or commerce, with the result that they are also discontented and present a problem which requires to be seriously tackled", said Sir Albion Banerjee in his famous interview in March 1929, earlier referred to. For these reasons

Dogras and the Pandits have never formed an alliance in ate politics. Probably the leaders of both the communities ght have, under the influence of their anti-Muslim prejudices, olishly spoiled the opportunity and lost the splendid chance capturing the soul of the National Conference, the only eapon in the hands of the revolutionary masses in the State 1940. But happily for the State Hindus but unhappily for he immediate future of Kashmir, an intelligent and an ex- perienced fellow was present in the State who most adroitly anipulated the affair in the best interests of the Hindu vested nterests and indeed for the welfare of Hindu India according to he orthodox communalist's view-point.

In 1936 the Maharaja had appointed a crafty Brahmin Dewan Bahadur (afterwards Sir) N. Gopalaswami Ayyengar, an old, efficient and capable civil servant of Madras as his Prime Minister. Like all clever Hindus Ayyengar was a com- munalist and a nationalist at the same time. He was a sundried bureaucrat and a perfect disciplinarian who believed in strong government in Kashmir. Before he had administered the State for many months Ayyengar became thoroughly popular with the upper class Hindus. In equal measure, if not more, he earned the hatred of the Muslims and the progressives in the country. He was determined to eradicate the Freedom Movement before he left the country and for the achievement of this objective he had been applying all the energies of his active mind and soul.

Ayyengar was a Gandhist at heart and reposed complete confidence in the ideals of the Congress. He closely watched the events and developments which took place in Kashmir politics during the days of Nehru's tour. He could rightly guess the spiritual and moral crisis through which Abdullah was passing. In a flash of genius he thought of playing the role that ordinarily should have been played by the State Hindu leaders. He became sympathetic towards the top-most man of the Nation- al Conference and encouraged him to plunge headlong into the Congress ideology. As we shall presently see, the lead given by Ayyengar was speedily followed by the conservative and re-

actionary Hindus of the State who began to join the ranks of the National Conference in increasing numbers.

This episode of Nehru's visit to the Valley killed Abdullah the revolutionary, the fighter for freedom. We shall no more hear of him in that capacity. Of course Abdullah continued to cry and harangue in the name of the Holy Cause but in reality all that he did after this was actuated and prompted by his lust for power and fame. No doubt he has been all along rationalising his anti-democratic and anti national activities by adducing as many plausible and clever arguments as his advisers could think of, but as we shall see in the course of this survey, gradually but surely he has been led astray and has gone away from the goal of the Freedom Movement in the opposite direction. Ultimately he became a tool to crush the people of Kashmir in the hands of those very exploiting forces whom he had originally planned to exterminate.

Kashmir Muslims made a grievance out of Nehru's visit by saying that the National Conference had entirely identified itself with the "Hindu Body", the Congress. This complaint became so widespread within a few months of the departure of Nehru that when the second session of the National Conference met at Baramulla on 28th September, 1940, all the delegates were nominated as only a small number of primary members had been enrolled during the course of the year. No Muslim delegates attended from the Jammu province except the Mirpur district. It was significant that a large contingent of Hindu and Sikh delegates had come from all over the State and even from Jammu.

The total indifference of the Muslims towards the National Conference disheartened many Muslim nationalist leaders, notably Afzal Beg and Maulvi Sayid the two communally inclined members of the high command, if not Abdullah and Bakshi as well. But what was the remedy ? By now all the leaders had come round to the view that the alliance with the Congress was essential to secure funds and publicity for the National Conference. Nevertheless it was equally necessary that the State Muslims should be brought back into the Conference fold.

For that some device was to be thought over and acted upon. An opportunity came handy.

A few days after the Baramulla Session, the Government issued their orders on the recommendations of the official committee which they had set up two years earlier for the reorganisation of the educational system then prevalent in the State. While dealing with the medium of instruction in the State schools the government ordered :

> "The language should be a common one, viz., simple Urdu. But for reading and writing, both the Devanagri script and the Persian script should have equal recognition. The text books to be used in imparting instructions in the various subjects should be same but printed in both scripts."
>
> "Pupils attending a school should be at liberty to choose to use either of the two scripts for reading and writing.
>
> "Teachers employed in schools which have or are likely to have a fixed minimum strength of children to learn each of the two recognised scripts should know both scripts. This minimum strength is fixed at 15 per cent of the total average strength on the rolls of the schools.
>
> "Teachers who are already employed in schools which require both scripts but who are not acquainted with one of them should learn it to the satisfaction of a prescribed authority within a period of one year. No person will be appointed to the post of a teacher in any such school in the future unless he knows to read and write both scripts or if he does not know both scripts he shall not be confirmed in his post unless, within a period of one year of his appointment, he learns to read and write satisfactorily the script with which he is not already familiar."

These orders were quite reasonable. They had a value from nationalist point of view because of the principle of self-determination which they allowed in the matter of choice of the script to all sections of the people living in the State. And what was more they were quite in accordance with the demand of the National Conference as contained in the resolution of the Working Committee adopted at Mirpur mentioned earlier in this chapter.

The Government orders were not liked by the disgruntled communal Muslims. They thought it to be an opportune moment to make an assault on the Nationalists and finish them. The provisions of the Government orders were misreported. Irresponsible and inflammatory speeches were made in certain

quarters to excite the Muslims. An attempt was made by number of Muslim workers to revive the Muslim Conferen and a manifesto was issued on 1st October, 1940, for the purpos

Nationalist Muslims now became desperate and Abdull made a somersault. Before the members of the Working Co mittee had an opportunity to discuss the problem among the selves he and his two Muslim colleagues, Afzal Beg a Mohammed Sayid, issued statements, delivered speeches a persuaded Muslim gatherings to adopt resolutions vigorous condemning the Government orders. It is not surprising tha remarks casting aspersions on Hindus were also made in thes exclusive Muslim gatherings which were mostly held in th premises of the mosques.

Inside the Legislature too the Nationalist Group compose of eight Muslim members, under direction of Abdullah, followe a similar course. One of its members, Maulvi Ghulam Mustaf made very wild and reckless charges against the Pandit commu nity as a whole in the course of his speech supporting a cu motion to "discuss the preponderance of Kashmiri Pandits i State Service".

It was clear beyond doubt that the Conference had ceased to be a revolutionary nationalist body which had come int existence to express the inner urge of the suppressed and tyran nised masses and to fight for the freedom of the country. I appeared certain that with the lead Abdullah was giving Kash mir would land into great difficulties. No more could thos people support him whose only aim in life was the emancipa tion of their motherland from alien dominance and freedom o Kashmiris from political, social, economic and spiritual thral dom. Therefore with a heavy heart Prem Nath Bazaz resigned from the membership of the Working Committee on the 28th November, 1940. When the matters went on deteriorating still further he left the Conference for good a few months later. Bazaz was followed by many others who on similar grounds despaired of the future of the National Conference and disso ciated from the organization.

CHAPTER TEN

AN UNHOLY ALLIANCE

THIS new turn in the National Conference politics dismayed the Hindus but not the cunning Ayyengar. He did not lose his patience. He was of the opinion that if by temporarily and superficially becoming anti-Hindu and pro-communalist Abdullah and his colleagues can rehabilitate their prestige and popularity among the Muslim masses, the State Hindus should not be scared by it. They should welcome it as a policy designed in the best interests of the State minorities. Only in one thing, Ayyengar thought, the Hindus need remain cautious; in basic matters of all India importance Abdullah and his National Conference should continue to remain on the side of the Congress. If that was assured other problems of lesser consequence would take care of themselves and should not cause great worry to the Hindus. Ayyengar's diagnosis from the reactionary Hindu viewpoint was eminently judicious and right. Not only did he himself adjust the policy of his government to it so long as he remained the Prime Minister of Kashmir State; subsequently the Congress leaders and the Congress Government of India have also tenaciously stuck to it.

Muslim communalists have frequently levelled the charge against Ayyengar that it was through his machinations and manoeuvrings that the Muslim Conference was converted into National Conference. There is not a shred of truth in this accusation (or is it an undeserved compliment?). It is a slur on the intelligence, patriotism, honesty and sincerity of all Muslim leaders including Abbas and Sagar who deliberately and voluntarily agreed to secularise State politics in June 1939. In 1938-39 the Conference was pulsating with revolutionary fervour. For once in the history of the struggle all prominent, popular and renowned leaders had joined hands to liberate Kashmir. This prospect was not welcomed by Ayyengar and indeed it had

shaken him in his shoes. He was not sure that he would
able to face the rising tide of nationalism in the State. He the
fore tried to crush the movement by imprisoning hundreds
people including the signatories to the National Demand
August-September, 1939. This is a clear proof that Ayyeng
was afraid of the Freedom Movement becoming broad-base
divorced from religion and free from ideological confusion.
fully understood that a mass movement in Kashmir would b
Muslim movement in essence which would overthrow the Hin
Dogra Rule and immensely strengthen the forces of Muslim
Nationalism in North India. What perplexed him most wa
that many Hindus had begun to give open support to the Mu
lim movement. These fears were not illusory. Had Abdulla
not lost his balance and had he not been tormented by insat
able hunger for power and publicity, Kashmir would have ma
ched on the path of freedom from victory to victory under th
banner of the National Conference and would not have bee
bleeding and lying prostrate under the iron heels of the foreig
armies as it is today. But let us not anticipate.

The campaign of Abdullah against the Government order
regarding the medium of instruction in the schools did no
gather any strength. For obvious reasons Hindus were opposed
to it and Muslims did not actively support it because they fel
aggrieved owing to the pro-Congress policy of the National
Conference. Ayyengar's government simply ignored the agita-
tion and let Abdullah and his colleagues spit fire for a few
weeks and cool down in the end.

In British India political conditions were changing
with astounding speed. Jinnah had started a war of nerves
through his flood of statements and was inflicting defeat after
defeat on Congress leaders. He had created a psychological
atmosphere in the subcontinent in which Muslims began to
look upon the Congress as the enemy of the Faith. When the
Muslim League adopted the epoch-making resolution in 1940
at its Lahore Session demanding the partition of India on reli-
gious basis, though conceited Congressmen derided the move as
impracticable and absurd, thoughtful Hindus were deeply per-

bed. The cool-headed and crafty Brahmin Prime Minister
Kashmir had the sagacity to foresee that this Hindu State
h overwhelming Muslim population was in the "danger zone"
unless something was done in advance to strengthen
foundations of the Dogra Raj by allying an influential
ction of the Kashmir Muslims with it, it was foredoomed to
be included in Pakistan. So when Abdullah voluntarily led
the National Conference direct into the Congress parlour,
Ayyengar heartily welcomed it and tried to encourage the
move in every way. He was however astute enough not to
expose his earnestness nor his patronage of Abdullah lest such
indiscreet actions might mar the bright chances of success for
the scheme that he had put into operation.

Having failed to produce any impression upon the mind of
the Government by his campaign of speeches and demonstrations
against the policy about the medium of instruction in schools,
Abdullah prevailed on his Working Committee to instruct the
Conference party in the Legislature to resign *en bloc* as a pro-
test. But the withdrawal of the eight members, all of whom
were Muslims, from the Legislative Assembly did not improve
the matters in any way because the Government, conscious of
the anti-Nationalist stand of the National Conference in the
controversy, felt sure that the agitation was bound to end in
dismal failure. And so it did. The National Conference leaders
had wrongly thought that the Government would hold bye-
elections to the Assembly for the seats that had been vacated
by the resignation of the members of the Nationalist party.
They wanted to take part in the contest and by making the
Hindi-Urdu issue as the main plank of the campaign, expected
to rouse the communal passions of the Muslims. By this method
the Nationalists hoped to kill two birds with one stone; first to
regain the lost prestige among the Kashmir Muslims and second
to win the bye-elections and thereby force the government to
amend their orders regarding the double script. But Ayyengar
was more than a match for the rabble-rousers. To their cha-
grin he decided not to have any bye-elections and left the
eight seats vacant in the Legislature. It was said that the legal

advisers to the Kashmir Government were of the opinion it would involve no infringement of the Constitution if Assembly carried on its functions without the presence of eight of its members who resigned voluntarily. The National were crest-fallen but could not even effectively protest as had by their actions forfeited the goodwill of the people in State.

Although N. Gopalaswami Ayyengar ardently desired the National Conference should remain on the side of Congress in the, then, impending clash in British Indian poli and should also co-operate with the Government with the pose of strengthening the Dogra Raj, he was cautious enou to see that no substantial power was transferred into the han of the Nationalists. Ayyengar was a die-hard administrator a a conservative statesman. He planned to satisfy the Nationali with trifles and petty concessions. In one thing, however, was abnormally generous towards Abdullah and his colleagu he overlooked all the law-breaking and peace-disturbing acti ties of the Nationalists when they were directed against the political opponents which unhappily was not infrequently the case.

For, after facing some initial difficulties Ghulam Abba was ultimately successful with the help of his Jammu colleagu in reviving the Muslim Conference in 1941. He had also bee able to enlist the sympathies of a small section of Muslims an the active support of Mir Waiz Usuf Shah and his followers i the Valley. Intolerant of any point of view in politics othe than their own, the Nationalists had been kicking up row i every ward and *mohalla* of the city with the followers of the Muslim Conference. Almost every week cases were reported of black eyes and bruised heads in the scuffles between the two factions of the Muslims, the victims mostly being the Muslim Conferencites.

It is useless to go into the details of this disgraceful chapter in the political history of the Valley. But it was significant that N.G. Ayyengar, the high-priest of strong government as he considered himself to be, did not take any action to bring the cul-

the violaters of law and order to book. Indeed he delitely connived at the atrocities of the Nationalists. The ious fight between the two sections culminated in a formidclash on the *Id* day when Sheikh Abdullah accompanied few followers went about from street to street in the hira Kadal area, a hocky stick in his hand, with which he t many a Muslim passerby who were suspected of having mpathies with the cause of the Muslim Conference. When his objectionable behaviour was adversely commented upon in the Press, Abdullah made the infamous remarks that "if to lence my opponents I have to take up a sword I will not hesitate to do so." Subsequent history of Kashmir has shown how truthful he has been in issuing this warning nearly twelve years ago.

The *Id-ul-Zuha* of 1942 is painfully remembered by the Kashmir Muslims to this day. Instead of being an occasion for rejoicings it turned to be a day of woes and tears. Innocent people were humiliated on the public streets, deprived of their belongings and made to utter slogans disliked by them. For fear of being looted many Muslims closed their shops. Gangs of Nationalists wandered through those parts of the city where they felt to be strong and collected tolls from shopkeepers belonging to the opposite camp.

In October 1941, Maharaja Hari Singh went abroad for a tour of the Middle East to meet the State troops which were fighting there in the Second World War on the side of the Allies. Immediately after his return the Maharaja issued an order on the advice of his Government headed by Ayyengar to impose a ban on the circulation of the book *Inside Kashmir* written by Prem Nath Bazaz which had been published a few days earlier. The Police searched the premises of "Hamdard" office and shops of booksellers in the city, took possession of as many copies of the book as they could lay their hands upon and subsequently destroyed them. The contents of the book had annoyed the Nationalists. They were happy that its circulation was stopped.

By now the policy of Ayyengar had begun to bear fruit.

The Nationalists had forgotten all about the revolution
were more busy and interested in vanquishing the
communalists than in the freedom of Kashmir. The Br
Prime Minister had earned the gratitude of the Natio
not by giving them any share, however tiny, in the Co
tional Government or the administration of the State b
allowing them perfect immunity from the long hand o
when they victimised and terrorised their opponents by
stones and other weapons.

Friendly relations having been established with the A
gar Government, the Nationalists thought of undoing the w
they had done to themselves by instructing their party me
to resign from the Legislature. They had seen to their di
that session after session of the Assembly had merrily passed
the eight seats lying empty. If anybody had suffered
from it, it was the National Conference which was deprive
the advantages of propaganda that this forum offered. But
could the resigned members get back into their seats. The
obliging Prime Minister readily came forth with an attra
though anti-democratic suggestion. Since the National G
ference was the "acknowledged popular" party, at any
acknowledged by the Maharaja's Government and the leader
the Conference themselves, there was no harm if the candid
proposed by the Conference were nominated by the spe
orders of the Maharaja to fill the eight vacant elected seats
the Assembly. Why should there be any election at all, op
the Prime Minister. The Working Committee was only
glad to accept the mischievous proposal. The names of t
candidates were presented in summer 1942 to the Prime Mi
ter; the Maharaja's commands were issued without any de
and the elected seats were filled up with nominated candidat
The people residing in the eight constituencies entitled to vo
under the provisions of the Constitution were deprived of th
right which they had earned after a hard struggle and by re
dering great sacrifices. This was the first serious blow that th
Nationalists dealt at the Constitutional Government in Kash
mir. With it started the process of slow assassination of Demo

in the State. It was yet another victory of Ayyengar to
gthen the despotic Dogra Raj and to weaken the Freedom
vement.

At the advent of winter 1942-43, an acute scarcity of fuel
felt in the Valley particularly in Srinagar. The Government
de some arrangements to supply fuel to the people at depots
ned in different parts of the city under the supervision of
Forest Department. There was a demand that non-offi-
ls should also be associated with the work in order that the
tribution of this necessity of life was equitable and all people,
gh and low, got their due share. A fuel committee composed
two non-officials, one Hindu and one Muslim, was established
advise the officer-in-charge of the Fuel Supply Department.
dhering strictly to his, by then well known, policy of
partiality towards the Nationalists, Ayyengar appointed a
leader of the National Conference, Ghulam Mohammed Bakhshi,
to represent the Muslims. Within a few days of the function-
ing of the Fuel Committee there was hue and cry from large
numbers of people who had been plainly told that they could
get no fuel because they were supporters of the Muslim Confe-
rence or followers of Mir Waiz Usuf Shah. Cries were raised
on all sides and innumerable complaints were addressed to the
Government but to no purpose. When people strongly protest-
ed against the partisan attitude of the National Conference
representative, they were insulted, abused and beaten. Cor-
ruption was rampant at the depots and a big portion of
the fuel went into black market the proceeds of which,
as reported in the Press, were shared by the officials
and non-officials alike. At the same time Ayyengar Gov-
ernment appointed another committee composed of offi-
cials and non-officials to revise the *shali* ration cards and
again a Nationalist was taken as one of the members. This
Committee created havoc by either cancelling the cards of those
who were opposed to the Nationalist politics or by reducing the
number of their family members shown in the cards without any
reason. This gave a foretaste of the despotic, tyrannical, bar-
barous and corrupt regime that the Kashmir people were to

witness under the Nationalist Government in years to come from which the unfortunate Valley finds no way of liberation till the present day.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

JINNAH OUTWITS NATIONALISTS

IN 1942 *goondaism* and hooliganism were spreading to all parts of the Valley and it was becoming clearer day after day that the Muslim Conference was totally incapable to protect the people or even its own adherents against the criminal onslaughts of the Nationalists. If the new philosophy of terrorism practised by the Nationalists was allowed to take roots in the soil it would not only wipe out the Kashmir culture nourished through ages; it would prove a formidable menace for the Freedom Movement. All patriots to whatever ideology or community they belonged were thoroughly shaken by the perspective; some of them were stirred into action.

A few educated people mostly Kashmir Pandits had been regularly discussing problems facing the country and the ways and means by which the Freedom Movement could be resurrected from the ruin under which it had lain after the fall of the National Conference from its high principles. Witnessing the heart-rending events of the *Id* day and realising the inadequacy of the Muslim Conference ideology to lead the freedom fight, they decided to form a new revolutionary body in the State. It was called the Kashmir Socialist Party and came into being in March, 1942. Prominent among those who founded the Party were Prem Nath Bazaz and Kanhya Lal Kaul. The Socialists immediately applied themselves to the task of educating the people about the fundamental problems of economics and politics in order to make them politically conscious. A large number of young men and college students came under the influence of the Socialists. By the middle of 1942 another progressive organisation "Young Socialist League" came into existence to disseminate knowledge on the subjects of Philosophy, History, Independence, Democracy and Socialism. Sham Lal Yechha, Sana Ullah Shamim, Arjan Nath Chakku, Prithvi Nath Kaul, Ghulam

Mohammed Kashkari, Lok Nath Kissoo, Dwarika Nath
Nand Lal Wattal Brij Nath Safaya, G. Rasul Mir and Ka
Aima were some of the enthusiastic workers of the Leagu
ses were held under the auspices of the League where sc
education on politics was imparted to scores of youn
With the establishment of these two organisations the s
a progressive movement free from the taints of commu
and nationalism were laid in the Valley eleven years ag
be sure the Socialists had a limited following in the
which was confined to the intellectual classes and the s
community. But since the party had owned the positiv
come of the Kashmir Freedom Movement through the age
adopted it to scientific modernism, it was bound to brin
revolutionary masses under its banner. That part of the
we shall tell at its proper place.

Early in 1942 the British Government deputed Sir St
Cripps with certain proposals for grant of independence to
Till the time of the despatch of this Mission the B
Government had been insisting on the unity of the su
tinent though at the same time it was made explicit
official declarations that the Imperial Government coul
hand over power to the Indians unless and until the real r
sentatives of all the classes and communities were agreed o
future form of government and its composition. For the
time the National Government of Britain envisaged the part
of India in the Cripps Plan by proposing that if the provi
with Muslim majorities so desired they could federate by th
selves and secede from the residue of the subcontinent.

It was an important condition for the implementat
of the Plan that it should be acceptable to all the main p
tical parties in India including the Congress and the Leag
This condition was not fulfilled and Cripps returned unsucce
ful. But the publication of the Plan strengthened the position
the Muslim League and its leader Jinnah among the Muslim
Pakistan no more remained a visionary's fantastic dream and
political absurdity. Sensible people felt that sooner or lat
it was bound to come into existence. If that was so the pla

ashmir which is overwhelmingly Muslim in its population
d be nowhere else except in the Islamic State of Pakistan.
thought became galling to the Nationalists. They had
dy lost considerable ground in the political field because
heir misdeeds. The new development in the British Indian
tics dealt a fresh blow at their prestige. However the
ture of the Cripps Mission provided an opportunity to heave
gh of relief. It was soon after this new crisis in their poli-
that the Nationalists developed a novel policy of espousing
gue ideology inside the State and advocating the Congress
cularism outside it. The common accusation against the Na-
onalists that they are nationalists in India and communalists
home is not entirely unfounded.

The Quit India Movement demanding the total withdrawal
the British from the subcontinent was started by the Congress
August 1942. Jinnah called it a dagger that the Congress had
laced at the breast of the Muslims so that they may be cowed
own and then discontinue to demand their right of self-deter-
mination. But Jinnah was not the man to be so easily terrorised.
He did not allow the Muslim point of view to be drowned in
the din and bustle that the Quit India agitation roused in the
Hindu Provinces.

In Kashmir the Nationalists did their best to kick up a
tow in support of the Congress. But they failed because the
Muslims refused to be a party to it. Not only did the supporters
of the Muslim Conference oppose the Nationalists because Jinnah
had publicly warned the Muslims to keep aloof from falling into
the Congress trap; but Kashmir Socialist Party also issued
a closely reasoned Manifesto stressing that the sabotage move-
ment of the Congress was bound to impair the war efforts of the
Allies and that it could be dangerous for World Democracy of
which Indian Democracy was an integral part. "It is foolish to
believe that democracy in India can come into its own after
the triumph of Fascism on the international front," declared the
Kashmir Socialists. "Our hope lies in the success of World
Democracy and we refuse to be duped by reactionary Indian
Nationalism as represented by the Congress". Many thousand

copies of the Manifesto in English and Urdu languages were distributed by the members of the Young Socialist League in colleges, schools, offices, hotels and the general public in Srinagar and other big towns of the Valley. This vehement opposition to the Nationalists' move threw cold water over all their activities. But they were not disheartened as Premier Ayyengar was encouraging them to carry on as best they could. Day in and day out the Nationalist leaders held public meetings where most vituperative and filthy language was used to present the Allies particularly the British in darkest colours. But no passions could be roused in the Valley and the game had to be abandoned.

The hostility of the Kashmir Muslims to the National Conference was well known by this time. The people had partly joined the Muslim Conference and partly they were coming under the influence of the progressive democratic forces represented by the Kashmir Socialist Party. If Ayyengar had proved eminently successful in his plan to turn the National Conference into a full-fledged branch of the Congress and the Nationalists into loyal subjects of the Dogra Ruler, he had miserably failed in deluding the people that the Nationalist leaders continued to be the revolutionaries and fighters for the freedom of the land. Ayyengar could not help the National Conference becoming unpopular and he himself became hateful both among the Muslims and the progressive classes in the State. No doubt he imparted strength and tone to the administration but by his partisanship for the Nationalists and distrust of Muslims he created distressing conditions in the State from the effects of which we have not yet been able to extricate ourselves.

The year of grace 1943 saw N.G. Ayyengar shaking in his high office. He was no more wanted in the State. It became known early in March that he had resigned and wanted to leave the country immediately. The reason of his unexpected relinquishment of office is a mystery which has not been unravelled up to this day. It was reported at the time that Jinnah made a complaint to the Viceroy that Ayyengar was playing mischief in State politics and on its basis the Imperial Govern-

ment dropped a hint to the Maharaja. I was told by Ayyengar's successor that the Maharaja did not like him and nourished several personal grievances against him. This much is certain that Ayyengar was loath to go but was forced by circumstances beyond his control to bid good-bye to the State. A few days before he left, the Dogra Hindus gave a farewell party to him on 12th March in Jammu where his services to the State were praised. That very day the leading journalists and newspapermen of Jammu and Kashmir held a Conference in the city. Prem Nath Bazaz was chosen to preside over it. In his address Bazaz bitterly criticised Ayyengar's regime for its short-sighted policy and narrow outlook. On the day Ayyengar left the State, Muslims organised a hostile demonstration and celebrated a day of deliverence.

Ayyengar was succeeded by Raja Maharaj Singh, a liberal politician, an experienced statesman and a man of noble culture and cosmopolitan tastes. His appointment was welcomed on all sides and Muslims felt jubilant over it.

Ayyengar's departure was a great blow to the Nationalists which they felt most acutely. Soon after Maharaj Singh's appointment was announced the annual session of the National Conference was held by the end of March at Mirpur, the stronghold of the Hindu money-lenders (Sahukars). To what extent the basis and the complexion of the organisation had undergone a change during the past three years could be guaged by the fact that the entire expenditure for the holding of the session was contributed by the *Sahukars*. The majority of the Reception Committee members was composed of them. It was not without good reason that the money-lending classes which were once counted among the fiercest enemies of the Freedom Movement in the State had come round to be the best admirers of the National Conference. The *Sahukars* wholeheartedly supported every proposal passed in the session.

Referring to the appointment of Raja Maharaj Singh as Premier of the State, Abdullah, who presided over the session, remarked that "it was another machination of the British to send a Christian, an alien, to our country to rule over us."

Because Maharaj Singh was a Christian, therefore he was an alien! This was and has continued to be the standard nationalism, secularism and knowledge of the Nationalists.

Raja Maharaj Singh proved unorthodox in his way. Though born of a high aristocratic family he behaved like a commoner even as a Prime Minister. Most of his time he spent making extensive tours throughout the Valley to come in touch with all classes and sections of the people. He was approachable to the poorest and the humblest of the citizen. He roamed about at odd hours in different parts of Srinagar and met men of the lowest classes and meanest professions to ascertain their needs, grievances and complaints. He paid surprise visits to the Government and semi-Government offices to see how the officialdom was functioning. He cut short the red tape of bureaucracy as much as he could.

Raja Maharaj Singh detested to employ underhand means in politics or encourage one party against another. He wanted to be fair to all the organisations among all the communities. He dissolved the Fuel and *Shali* Ration Committees immediately the truth about them was brought to his knowledge. Though as subsequent events have proved, he was also pro-Congress he used to say that as Prime Minister of the State it meant nothing to him which party was popular; so far as he was concerned he would provide equal opportunity for all to function. And he kept his word till the last day that he remained in the State.

In absence of the governmental repression and oppression and with the fullest opportunity to work that was now available, the democratic forces began to rise and develop perceptibly within days. Ayyengar had refused permission for the publication of a daily edition of *The Hamdard*, the mouthpiece of the progressive sections in the State. Maharaj Singh secured the required consent of all the members of his Cabinet individually within 24 hours for this purpose, an achievement unknown in the working of the administration in Kashmir. He was sympathetic, considerate, and accommodating to the young State Press. He always overlooked the small faults and technical irregu-

larities of the newspapers. Even when told to do so by the Maharaja himself the generous Prime Minister refused to penalise a journal and thought only a verbal warning would meet the ends of justice. Maharaj Singh was of the opinion that the bickerings and clashes between the followers of the National Conference and Muslim Conference were very harmful for the progress of the country. He invited the representatives of both the parties on 17 June and tried his best to reconcile them. When he failed in his attempts he advised both the parties to function peacefully. Never before in the history of the Dogra Rule had people of Kashmir seen such a good-hearted, tolerant, far-sighted and progressive Prime Minister as Maharaj Singh. Had he remained in Kashmir for a fairly long period there can be no doubt that the subsequent history of the State would have been different from what it has been.

Maharaj Singh dazzled everybody with what he did. People accustomed to live under the lifeless bureaucratic administration could not decide whether they were dreaming or seeing things in real life. It was evident the Prime Minister had damaged the vested interests of many sections including the Nationalists. He had also given a rude shaking to the official class. Those harmed called him mad. To the Maharaja the Prime Minister's policy and method of work proved a dose too hard to digest. The ruler thought of applying a brake. The Prime Minister's proposals had to pass through several hands before they could reach the table of the Maharaja. Lady Maharaj Singh, wife of the Prime Minister, visited the women's hospital at Rainawari where she donated her own blood for a poor suffering village girl in need of it. The Maharaja, curiously enough, resented this and sent word that the Prime Minister and his wife should not mix too much with the common people. This was more than Raja Maharaj Singh had bargained for. He resigned and immediately left the State on 26 July only three months and seven days after his appointment. The light that had brightened the hopes of Kashmir people was extinguished.

Maharaj Singh's resignation had a parallel in Kashm history in the relinquishment of office under almost simil circumstances by Albion Banerjee fourteen years earlier March 1929. Lest history should repeat itself after the depa ture of Maharaj Singh, the reactionary well-wishers of th Dogra Rule inside and outside the country advised the Mah raja that the time had come when he should take steps to loo closely into the various aspects of the administration with th aim of removing defects that might be found in it. It was al considered highly necessary that the excited and enrage people should be pacified by giving them some hopes and pro mises of all-round reforms in the constitutional governme as well as in the administration before they get out of contro The Maharaja accordingly instituted a commission of enqui under the presidentship of Chief Justice Sir Ganga Nath. Thi was done on 14th July twelve days before Maharaj Singh departed so that the effects of the popular Prime Minister resignation may be counteracted and neutralised by the hope which the institution of the Royal Commission was expected to arouse. Maharaj Singh was not even consulted by th Maharaja while mooting the proposal or in preparing the roya declaration.

The terms of reference of the Royal Commission were so clumsily drafted, so vague and complicated that on their very face it was quite clear that the enquiry would lead the country nowhere. Out of the twenty non-official members the majority belonged to the vested interests and reactionary classes. Of course there were two representatives of the Nation al Conference, Afzal Beg and Ghulam Mohammed Sadiq,among the members. But neither the Muslim Conference nor the Socia list Party was allotted any seat in the Commission, though many other organisations of lesser importance were represented.

From the very outset the progressives were critical of the measure and frankly told the people that it was futile to pin their hopes on the outcome of the labours of the Commission. The Muslim Conference decided to non-cooperate with it. After prolonged deliberations on 18th and 19th August, the National-

ist leaders came to the conclusion that the Freedom Movement could be strengthened by supporting the declaration of the Maharaja and therefore the Working Committee of the National Conference adopted a resolution instructing Beg and Sadiq to participate in the enquiry of the Commission.

As if to undo the good work that Maharaj Singh did for the poor during the brief span of his office, the Maharaja appointed a notorious die-hard reactionary septuagenarian, Sir Kailas Narain Haksar, with a feudal outlook and wily designs to be incharge of the affairs in the State. Haksar had administered some of the very backward States of Rajputana for a number of years as Prime Minister. It was beyond his comprehension how the people of any native State could enjoy liberties as the Kashmiris did in 1943. His only ambition seemed to be to curtail these liberties to the maximum in order to lower Kashmiris to the level of the people of the Rajputana States. Besides, he wanted to make the Muslims feel and understand that they were living under Hindu rule where any pro-Muslim activities were intolerable and would be firmly suppressed. This was the service he wanted to render to the Maharaja and to this task he applied himself in right earnest. Oddly, (or perhaps not so oddly) the Nationalists were attracted towards Haksar from the very first day he took over as Prime Minister and before long became his friends and admirers.

The Muslim Conference decided to hold its annual session on 13th and 14th August in Srinagar. Haksar imposed humiliating restrictions including one that neither an outsider should participate in the deliberations nor should any speaker refer to outside politics. A month before the session, Nawab Bahadur Yar Jung, President of the All India States' Muslim League, had publicly expressed his intention of attending it. Accompanied by his wife he came on the notified day. The Government ordered him to quit and when he hesitated the Police arrested him and leaving his wife behind, carried him in a police van to Kohala, the border post on the J.V. Road. Before his arrest the Nawab had addressed a letter to the Prime Minister assuring him that he would remain a silent spectator at the session but this com-

munication was not even acknowledged. While the Ha
Government disallowed Nawab Bahadur Yar Jung to stay wi
the borders of the State, Tushar Kanti Ghosh, also an outs
but a Hindu, was put up as an honoured guest of the Reve
Minister. He delivered his inaugural address to the Editors C
ference a few days later on 20th August upholding politi
ideology of *Akhand* Hindustan. Many speeches supporting C
gress politics were also made by others in this Conferen
There were vigorous protests on every side against this invi
ous distinction and the *Hamdard* wrote editorials forcefully a
fearlessly criticising the partisan policy of the Government. T
Daily also discussed the causes and the consequences of t
resignation of Raja Maharaj Singh. Kailas Narain Haksar fort
with pressed the weapon of the Press Act into service a
demanded a heavy security from the Daily thinking that in th
way he would be able to smother the disloyal journal. *The Ha*
dard issued an appeal to the people for funds and the Gover
ment no less than the reactionary and anti-democratic class
were surprised and dismayed to find that the full amount of th
security was subscribed in small pieces of annas and rupees with
in the prescribed time and the Daily saved from assassination.

Haksar was not destined to rule over the State for a lon
time. A man with the out-dated ideas and archaic views coul
not prove successful where comparatively liberal and undoub
tedly efficient Ayyengar had failed. That Haksar had to face
hostility from the Muslims and the progressive democrats was
but natural in the circumstances but nobody could imagine that
this devotee at the shrine of reaction and communalism would
unexpectedly come into clash with his spiritual allies, the
Dogras.

There was scarcity of grains in Jammu; the hoarders and
profiteers had cornered food stuffs and created famine conditions
in the province. The hungry people were crying and appealing
to the Government to take drastic steps to bring the culprits
to book. But Haksar, busy in suppressing the forces of demo-
cracy and freedom, paid little heed to it. And when the fami-
shed crowd took out a procession on 24th September through

streets of the city to express resentment and anger the
lice resorted to indiscriminate firing killing nine people and
nding more than thirty. This roused the righteous indigna-
n of the entire Dogra community, both Hindu and Muslim.
e Kashmiris also expressed deepest sympathy with those who
d suffered.

Haksar, now awakened from his slumber, realized that it
was not an easy task to rule Kashmir ; post-haste he proceeded
to Jammu to mollify the Dogras. The State Legislature was in
session at Srinagar. The session was postponed as a recognition
of the importance of Jammu happenings which demanded the
immediate attention of the Ministers as well as the leaders of the
people. For the first time under their own rule the Dogras had
been slaughtered by the State police. There was great excite-
ment and resentment. Both the Maharaja and the Maharani
were perturbed. A commission of enquiry into the firing was
instituted with Justice Gobind Madgaonkar, a judge of Bombay
High Court, as president. But the reputation of Haksar was
irreparably damaged. Maharaja Hari Singh could no longer
have any faith in his Prime Minister's intelligence and efficiency
to be at the head of the administration. He started a despe-
rate hunt for a really capable man of well established
reputation who could steer the ship of the State clear of all
shoals and rocks during the stormy days that even the blind
could see were ahead.

There were not many applicants for the post of the Prime
Minister of Kashmir now. All the prospective candidates were
scared by the reports of the reasons that led to the sensational
resignation of Maharaj Singh and contemplated discharge of
Kailas Narain Haksar. The State had fallen into disrepute.
With great difficulty Maharaja Hari Singh was able to secure,
through the assistance of the Government of India, the services
of Sir Benegal N. Rao, a judge of the Calcutta High Court, who
consented to take up the responsibilities as the new Prime
Minister. But before doing so he visited the Valley and ascer-
tained the real conditions for himself. It took Sir Benegal no
less than four months to come to this decision. Meanwhile

unruffled Haksar vigorously pursued his anti-democra
pro-Nationalist policy with undivided attention.

In September Saif Shah, an elected member of the
Assembly, died. Following in the footsteps of Ayyengar an
pite persistent opposition from the people, Haksar nomin
Nationalist, Soofi Mohammed Akbar, as a member depriv
electorate in the constituency of their right to choose
own representative.

But the worse was yet to come. The despotic H
issued a fiat that no Muslim leader should make any spee
a political nature on the occasion of *Id* after the praye
they were accustomed to do. Mir Waiz Usuf Shah obeyed
Abdullah flouted the orders and delivered a fiery speech a
Gah. As usual Abdullah threatened, abused and challe
his opponents in the speech. But Haksar's Government did
stir and connived at this open defiance of law by the Nation
leader. Protests were raised on all sides at this unabas
partisanship by the Authority and Ghulam Abbas issue
statement bitterly criticising the attitude of the Governm
Haksar's defence was amusing. "The President of the Natio
Conference delivered a most objectionable lengthy speech wi
out securing any permission", admitted a press note which
issued by the Publicity Office of the Kashmir Government
4th November 1943. "Action could be taken and can be tak
against it. But at the suggestion of the Hon'ble Revenue Mini
ter against whom the speech was directed nothing was done
he did not like that it should be pointed out that the case w
launched on personal grounds". It was a clever way of permi
ting the Nationalists to take law into their own hands. Abdulla
had abused in his speech not only the Revenue Minister bu
many other political leaders when, according to the Press note
there was ban on the holding of public meetings for purposes o
political propaganda. The immunity enjoyed by the Nationalist
was a part of the Government's policy.

Sir Benegal ultimately assumed charge in January 1944.
Hope of improving his own delicate health in the salubrious
climate and the enchanting and romantic scenery of the Valley

his wavering mind. Soon after Sir Benegal became the
Minister, he declared in a press conference that it was
desire to make Kashmir "a Model State". To achieve
great ambition needed many qualities of statesmanship.
Harsingh Rao was a perfect gentleman, honest of purpose
noble at heart. Personally he remained scrupulously aloof
the factions in local politics and treated all parties,
mmunities and classes equally fairly. He wanted to give free-
m within the four corners of the law to all sections of the
ople to function and did not unnecessarily interfere in the
fairs of the State Press.

Sir Benegal's training as a judge for a long time, however,
oved both a merit and a drawback in him as the Head of
Administration in Kashmir. Though it was not easy for any one
influence the Prime Minister by giving him one-sided exag-
gerated reports as the judge in him was keen to know and com-
prehend the various aspects of an issue, yet he was often hesi-
tant to undertake any important work demanding urgent execu-
tion lest he might not have yet fully considered the matter. For
this reason till the end of his tenure of office he failed to achieve
anything substantial. His critics not infrequently hurled taunts
and gibes at him because his "Model State" was nowhere in the
process of emergence and the conditions of the State people
continued as hopeless as they were before he came.

In 1944 political prospects had become quite dreary for
the Congress in India and, because of it, for the Nationalists in
Kashmir also. The British authorities had been successful in
suppressing the Quit India Movement. Since December 1942
after the landing of American forces in North Africa the fate
of the Second World War had definitely turned in favour of
the Allies and in 1944 the final victory was in sight. It appeared
that the solution of the Indian problem of Independence would
not be made according to the sweet will of the Congress
leaders who claimed to be the sole representatives of the Indian
nation. It was certain that the spokesmen of all classes and
communities would be consulted no less than the leaders of the
Congress. Jinnah had by his extraordinary political acumen

and sagacity considerably raised his own prestige and mad
Muslim League a powerful organisation which alone
deliver goods on behalf of the Indian Muslims.

In this changed political climate the Nationalist le
of Kashmir, quite baffled about the future, decided to
friends with the Muslim League and accept the overlordsh
Quaide Azam Jinnah. They however adopted a wrong me
of approach which frustrated their plan and worsened t
position in the State.

One after another, emissaries of the National Confere
went during the months of March and April 1944, from Srina
to New Delhi to wait upon Jinnah with the prayer that he
arbitrate in the issue between the two parties of Kashmir M
lims—the National Conferencites and the Muslim Confer
cites. Sheikh Abdullah, president of the National Conferen
and Mohammed Sayid, general secretary, also went to Lah
and implored the League President to intervene in Kash
affairs. The astute Quaide Azam was the last man to be
willing or hesitant to grasp the opportunity that presen
itself to Muslimise the nationalistic State politics. And wh
the Muslim Conference leaders also approached him with
similar request he only too willingly accepted to do this
of service to the cause of Islam. Both the parties invited
League President to visit Kashmir and study the probl
on the spot. On 6 May Jinnah sent a telegram to Abbas infor
ing him of his decision to leave for Kashmir and advised him
apprise Abdullah and Mir Waiz Usuf of the programme.

Jinnah reached Jammu on 9 May. He was accompani
by his sister. Arrangements for the reception of the Leag
President had been made from the borders of the State righ
up to Srinagar. In Jammu only the Muslim Conferencites too
part in the function as no Hindus participated in it and the
were no Nationalist Muslims in that city. From Banihal, where
the Kashmir Province begins, Nationalists vied with the sup
porters of the Muslim Conference in giving a grand ovation to
Jinnah. At places there were scuffles, ugly scenes and many
people were injured. In a clash at Khanabal while the honour

guest was having tea with Abbas, Mir Waiz Usuf, Beg and
khshi in the Dak Bungalow, teeth of one Mohammed Ismail
heikh, a worker of the Muslim Conference, were broken by
e Nationalist volunteers and he was shown to Jinnah in that
ondition.

Jinnah and the party reached Srinagar at 6.30 p.m. on 10
lay. Immediately after arrival, the League leader was pre-
ented with addresses of welcome at two places where thousands
of people had gathered to hear him. In the Pratap Park
meeting which was held under the auspices of the National
Conference, Abdullah, claiming to represent the forty lakhs of
State Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, welcomed Jinnah whom he ad-
dressed as "the beloved leader of the Muslims of India". Jinnah
took the fullest advantage of the moment. "Even kings can feel
proud at the warmth of welcome you have given me," observed
he in reply. He added: "But this reception is not meant for
my person; it is meant for the All India Muslim League
of which I am the President. By it you have honoured the
Muslims of India who are organised under the Muslim League".
Clearly this was a hint to the Nationalists of what was to
come from Jinnah as arbitrator. The matter became still more
clear when a few minutes later Jinnah, replying to the second
address of welcome presented on behalf of the Muslim Confe-
rence in a public meeting at Drugjan, advised the State Muslims
that they should remain solidly united. "If your objective is
one then your voice will become one. I am a Muslim and
my all sympathies are for the Muslim cause," he told the
audience.

Jinnah stayed in Srinagar for more than two months. He
refused to give any verdict in haste. He gave a patient hearing
to the prominent leaders of both the parties including Abdullah,
G.M. Sadiq, Mohammed Sayid, Afzal Beg, Ahmed Yar, Ghulam
Abbas, Mir Waiz Usuf and many others. He also met certain
eminent public men including Hindu politicians, outside the
ranks of the leaders of the two parties. He discussed State
affairs and the issue of the partition of India with Prem Nath
Bazaz in two lengthy interviews on 28 May and 29 June. He

studied all available literature on Kashmir and regularly
some leading local newspapers including *The Daily Ham*

Jinnah finally gave his award at midnight on 17
1944, in a speech which he delivered to a very big M
audience. The annual session of the Muslim Conferenc
held at the Muslim Park outside Jama Masjid on 16th
17th June. At the end of the session certain Muslim or
sations presented a joint address to the League leader a
was in reply to it that Jinnah made the historic pronouncem
"I have patiently heard the arguments of the Muslim leade
the National Conference. It is not for me to bring any pre
upon them because the State politics is different from the
tics of British India," declared he. "But as a Muslim I mus
what I feel is the right way for the Muslims. So far as I h
been able to understand the viewpoint of the Muslim leader
the National Conference, I do not think that they can succe
Jinnah revealed that "the leaders of the National Confere
had assured him that the National Conference is the party
the Muslims ; that their goal, policy and programme are
same as that of the Muslim Conference ; that they fight
the welfare of the Muslims and that if the State Hindus
Sikhs co-operate with them well and good, if not they
Nationalist Muslims) did not mind". Jinnah did not approv
this method and advised the State Muslims in these words :

> "You should awaken and instil life in the dead bones of the Mu
> Nation. This goal cannot be attained without unity. With one objec
> in view you should establish one platform and one organisation and r
> round one banner".

The Muslim League leader did not want to leave the Sta
Muslims in doubt about the particular organisation he reco
mended. He concluded his speech by saying :

> "99 per cent of the Muslims who met me are of the opinion that Mus
> Conference alone is the representative organisation of the State Muslim

Had the Nationalists possessed any power of unde
standing political issues and had they not been opportunist
and fortune-hunters it should not have been very difficult fo
them to foresee what the verdict of the League President woul
be. This was the only judgment that Jinnah could have passed

the issue and he need not have been invited to Kashmir to
ver it. He came and stayed in the Valley to study the
blem simply to give an appearance of seriousness to the whole
air. Even if the large majority of the State Muslims had been
ering to the National Conference in 1944, Jinnah would have
n quite unwilling to make a public admission to that effect.
e National Conference was still the best organised party
t it had already fallen in the eyes of State Muslims partly
ecause of rapid change in the political outlook of the Indian
Muslims and partly due to the misdeeds of the Nationalists.
So it was simply asking for the moon to hope that the Muslim
League President would accept the representative character of
the National Conference in State politics.

Naively enough the Nationalists were upset and infuriated
by the publicly pronounced devastating verdict of Jinnah. Not
unnaturally they thought they had committed suicide by volun-
tarily accepting the League President as the arbitrator. The
binding however was only moral and no legal value could be
attached to it. So to undo the mischief public meetings were
arranged in different "safe" zones of the city to oppose the "anti-
democratic" and "anti-State" observations of Jinnah. Abdullah
was the principal speaker in all these meetings. Never have
filthier words been said by any responsible man against his
opponents in Kashmir than were expressed by Abdullah in these
speeches. In one of the demogogic utterances he warned Jinnah,
on 20 June at Khanyar, to leave Kashmir. "If Jinnah does not
give up the habit of interfering in our politics it will be diffi-
cult for him to go back in an honourable manner". Jinnah left
on 24 July by J. V. Road. At Baramulla on 25 July Muslims
presented him with an address in a public meeting where a
Nationalist worker, Maqbool Sherwani, attempted to kick up a
row but with the intervention of the State police the function
ended without any untoward incident. At Muzaffarabad both
Muslims and Sikhs accorded a grand reception to him in a
function which was attended by thousands of men and
women.

More important than the verdict on the representative

character of the National Conference and the Muslim C
ference and certainly of historical value was the par
statement of Jinnah which he issued on the 24th July on
day of his departure. Perhaps there is no other pronoun
ment of the Father of Pakistan on the State politics whic
as weighty as this. "I have been here for some time and I h
seen all classes of people, and had the opportunity of hea
various views, and also Press reports and criticisms, som
which were unkind and unjust, but on the whole I am v
thankful for the kindness that was shown to me, especially
the Mussalmans," said Jinnah. Referring to politics he state

> "As I said at the moment I reached Jammu, it is not the policy of
> Muslim League to interfere with the internal administration of this S
> or the grave and serious issues that face the Maharaja and his Gove
> ment, as between him and his people, but we are certainly very dee
> concerned with the welfare of the Mussalmans in the State, and I m
> say that even a casual visitor cannot but be shocked to see the condit
> of the people in this State, even in matters of their elementary needs a
> necessities. Sir B. N. Rao has just taken charge as the Prime Minis
> of the State, and now the people are looking up to him and expect
> that he will take effective measures for their betterment."

Of tremendous importance were Jinnah's following remar
which, we shall see, the Maharaja and his Government ignor
at their own peril:

> "As regards the Mussalmans, as I said, we are vitally concerned w
> their welfare, but I regret that although Sheikh Abdullah and his par
> and the Muslim Conference discussed matters with me in Delhi and
> Lahore before my arrival here, and were good enough to accord me
> great reception, and were anxious that I should hear both sides and bri
> about a settlement, when I, after careful consideration, suggested th
> the Mussalmans should organize themselves under one flag and on on
> platform, not only my advice was not acceptable to Sheikh Abdulla
> but, as is his habit, which has become a second nature with him, h
> indulged in all sorts of language of a most offensive and vituperative
> character in attacking me. My advice to the Mussalmans is that th
> differences can only be resolved by argument, discussion, exchange o
> views, and reason, and not by *goondaism* and one thing that I must draw
> the attention of the Kashmir Government about is that *goondaism* must
> be put down at any cost, and there should be a constitutional liberty o
> speech and freedom of thought, which is the elementary right of every
> citizen under any civilized form of government."

The visit of the Muslim League President and his activi-

in the Valley with the crowning incident at the Muslim
rk meeting where the important verdict was delivered,
ave a great fillip to the movement for the resurgence of the
communalist politics in the State. It further weakened the
National Conference.

CHAPTER TWELVE

RISE OF DEMOCRATIC FORCES

THE Jinnah episode did not make the Nationalists
They had been orphaned. Hindus outside as w
inside the State had begun to suspect them. An
Muslims were alienated. The forceful and unequivocal lan
employed by the League leader in the statement whi
issued on the day of his departure had made it plain that
could be no friendship with Jinnah unless the Nationalists
prepared to go before him in sack cloth and ashes. Bu
alternative of cementing the alliance with the Hindus was
there. Only it would be necessary, after the flirtation with
League President, to furnish more substantial proofs of lo
to the Dogra Rule before the confidence of the Hindus c
be restored. This the Nationalists were prepared to do
all their heart. And a very suitable occasion came handy.

On 22 July 1944 Maharaja Hari Singh returned
Europe where he had been touring for sometime. The
actionary Hindu advisers of the Government considered it
best opportunity to test the loyalty of the Nationalists. N
before had the fighters for freedom participated in any pu
reception to the Maharaja since 1931. The Nationalists w
only too willing to alter the previous decision and take an ea
part in the public demonstration of sentiments of loyalty.
would the Muslims co-operate ? The reactionary Hindus a
the Dogra Government proceeded cautiously in the matter.

It speaks of the inefficiency, timidity and short-sightedn
of the Muslim Conference leaders that they could not deri
any advantage out of the consequences of the bombshell whi
Jinnah had thrown on the citadel of nationalism. They we
perfectly complacent and thought that the Nationalists ha
been crushed by Jinnah's verdict and could never rise again
What is worse, when the Nationalists decided to whole

dy participate in the public reception to the Maharaja,
ere afraid that their non-cooperation would prove sui-
Incredibly enough within a week after Jinnah's departure
uslim Conference leaders were rivalling the Nationalist
s in making huge preparations to receive the Maharaja in
ession through the streets of Srinagar. Jinnah's verdict
d to have been wiped out of memory and the country was
ting with the sentiments of loyalty towards the throne of
lien Hindu ruler.

For three days the Maharaja hesitated to receive the
ic ovation. However at the persistent requests of all the
lim leaders he ultimately condescended to pass through the
n streets of the city on the 31st July 1944. It must have
the happiest day for the alien prince to see how the leaders
e National Conference were vying with the leaders of the
slim Conference to demonstrate their deep sentiments of
hfulness, obedience and loyalty towards his person. The
ole city had been gaily bedecked with festoons, arches, gar-
ds, mottoes and flowers. It was a sight for gods to see
w Abdullah, once the symbol of revolution and struggle
inst despotism, was personally supervising the arrangements
beautifying the Mujahid Manzil, the headquarters of the
ational Conference, which stood on the way through which
e royal procession of the Dogra autocrat was to pass.

Many prominent Nationalist leaders were present at the
t who, under the leadership of Abdullah, raised the full-
oated slogan "*Maharaja Bahadur ki Jai*" as the procession
owly wended its way.

The event did not pass off peacefully. There were scuf-
es between the followers of the two organisations before and
ter the procession in which even the tallest leader fully
articipated.

The totally unexpected but grand success of the function
the city heartened the reactionaries. The Maharaja therefore
pured the Valley during the first week of August receiving
remendous applause and ovation from the followers of both, the
Muslim Conference and the National Conference, in every town

and village through which he passed. The folly of the Musl Conference leaders turned the victory of Jinnah into a failu Reaction was completely triumphant and this was what t Nationalists and the supporters of the Dogra Government h jointly planned to achieve. Hindus and the Congressmen we now anxious to rehabilitate the damaged reputation of Abdull and his colleagues in the Nationalist India. A lie was sedulou spread that Jinnah had gone uninvited to Kashmir to persua the Muslim leaders of the National Conference to own the tw nation theory of the Muslim League but had returned total disappointed. Vigorous efforts were made to prove th Abdullah was the unswerving follower of Gandhian Nationalis by conviction and the staunchest ally of the Congress.

Meanwhile the Royal Commission had been trodding it weary way and proving a big joke which the Maharaja ha played on the people. Apart from its defective and unsati factory terms of reference, the Commission suffered from th circumscribed mentality of the majority of its members parti cularly of its President. The time had come when nothing le than the grant of the unconditional right of self-determinatio to the Kashmir people could have brought the alien Maharaj nearer to his Muslim subjects. But this was the very thing tha every person whom the Maharaja chose to appoint his adviso told him not to do. The advisers came forth with variou palliatives to treat the cankerous growth that was eating int the vitals of State politics but all had this one factor in com mon; they denied the people freedom to decide their future an forge their own fate.

The partition of India had become a burning issue. In the correspondence between Jinnah and Rajgopalachari that had been published in the Press while the League President was in Kashmir, the eminent Congress leader had conceded the creat tion of Pakistan comprising of the provinces and parts of pro- vinces where the majority of the people was Muslim. Yet on 6 June, 1944, Justice Ganga Nath, President of the Royal Com- mission, angrily told Agha Sher Ali, a member, in a public sitting that "to talk of Pakistan in Kashmir is sedition". There was

howl and cry in a section of the State Press over the observation and the Muslims became hopeless about the outcome of the la- bours of the commission. Sensing that the commission had become unpopular, the Nationalists also decided to non-coopera- te and withdrew from it Beg and Sadiq, their members. While doing so they submitted to the Maharaja a comprehensive plan for the economic, social, political and cultural reconstruction of the State. The plan was subsequently published and has come to be known as "New Kashmir" Manifesto. The National Con- ference held its annual session on the 29 and 30 September at Sopore. The delegates to the session unanimously adopted "New Kashmir" as the objective of the Nationalist Party.

The "New Kashmir" Manifesto was divided into two parts (i) The Constitution of the State and (ii) The National Econo- mic Plan. The first part was further subdivided into several sections including (a) Citizenship (b) National Assembly (c) Council of Ministers (d) Ruler (e) Justice (f) Local Adminis- tration ; and (g) National Language. In the section for citizen- ship the people of Jammu and Kashmir State were guaranteed "Freedom of the Press", "Freedom of assembly and meetings" and "Freedom of street processions and demonstrations". The manifesto declared that the "privacy of home and secrecy of correspondence of the citizens shall not be violated except in accordance with law". Every citizen would be obliged to train himself to use and, would be ensured the right, to bear arms. Universal compulsory military service would be established by law. All citizens would have the right to work, that is, the right to receive guaranteed work and the right to rest. Other notable features of the draft Constitution of the State were :

(a) All students shall have the right to education.
(b) Women citizens shall be accorded equal rights with men in all fields of national life; economic, cultural, political and in the State services.
(c) All children born in the State shall be ensured equality of opportunity irrespective of accidents of birth and parentage.
(d) All citizens shall be secured protection by the law

and recourse to the courts through an administration of justice which shall be quick, cheap and impartial.

(e) The highest legislature of the State, the National Assembly, is to be elected by citizens of the State by electoral districts on the basis of one deputy per 40,000 population, for a period of five years.

(f) The Council of the Ministers of the State is to be responsible to the National Assembly.

(g) Women shall have the right to elect and to be elected upon equal terms with men in all institutions of the State.

(h) Justice shall be administered by the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and by the district and tehsil people's courts.

(i) The organs of State power in the districts, tehsils, cities and villages, shall be the people's panchayats.

(j) The national languages of the State shall be Kashmiri, Dogri, Balti (Pali), Dardi, Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu. Urdu shall be the *lingua franca* of the State.

The National Economic Plan was sub divided into (i) Production (ii) Transport (iii) Distribution (iv) Utility services and (v) Currency and Finance. The production was to be for use and not for exchange and the objective was to provide a reasonable standard of living for all people in the Jammu and Kashmir State. The basic principles of agricultural plan would be (i) abolition of landlordism (ii) land to the tiller (iii) cooperative association (iv) feeding the State people first and (v) people's control of the forests. A National Agricultural Council would be set up in the State to execute and supervise the national agricultural plan.

The Manifesto declared that the National Conference stands for the principle that all key industries must be in the hands of the people's government and therefore enumerated the following basic principles :

(1) Abolition of the big private capitalist.

(2) All key industries to be managed and owned by the democratic State.

(3) Private monopoly, whether formal or virtual, to be forbidden.

In order to direct, supervise and control the industrial effort along the lines of the national plan a National Industrial Council was to be set up.

Since one of the chief reasons for the backwardness of the State is the primitive nature of communications in all outlying areas, the Manifesto said "that any big plan for the regeneration of the country must plan a simultaneous development of the means of communication and transport". The establishment of a National Communications Council consisting of engineering experts and economic advisers was to be set up who would execute the plan in consultation with the Agricultural and Industrial Councils.

Emphasis was laid on the realisation that "distribution is a vital corner stone of any planned economy and that evils of industrialisation can and should be avoided if there is to be any equitable system of distribution". Every working man, woman and child in the State "was guaranteed freedom from want but no parasite was to be granted a share in consumption goods". The National Marketing Council consisting of business experts and economic advisers was to execute the distribution plan.

The safeguarding of the health of the citizens of the State was to be the primary duty of the State. With that purpose in view national councils were to be set up for public health education and housing. The National Public Health Council, constituted of the most efficient doctors and surgeons of the State along with economic advisers, would ensure widespread and efficient health services on the basis of (a) one doctor for every 1500 of the population (b) every village to have a medical attendance and first aid post (c) establishment of a State medical college and (d) encouragement to indigenous systems of medicine both *Ayurvedic* and *Yunani*. The National Educational Council consisting of educationists of standing was to prepare a scheme of State education containing proposals for creation of a (a) national university laying special stress on tradition and history, (b) a statistical institute, (c) an institute

of nationalities, (d) a network of higher, middle and prima schools, (e) district colleges for men and women students a (f) adult education night schools. "The National Housi Council consisting of engineers, public health experts, architec and economic advisers would prepare a programme of town a village planning with special reference to housing so that bene fits of modern science, design and sanitation may be brough into the homes of workers and peasants of the State". Th Manifesto declared that "it is the plan of the National Co ference to encourage our common culture, which includes th culture of all nationalities resident in the State by a many-side plan of development" through (a) establishment of a radio sta tion in the Kashmiri language (b) establishment of a nationa film industry and national theatre (c) encouragement of youth activity (d) the protection and development of ancient monu ments of historical interest, and (e) the establishment of a institute of art and culture.

Banking was to be nationalised and the currency to b regulated strictly ona national basis. With that purpose i view the National Economic Council consisting of bankers an financial experts was to draw up the financial plans of the Stat to (a) provide necessary funds for all productive organisation (b) regulate the price level and (c) fix the total wage-bill. Th money-lenders and usurers were to be put in the category o social parasities "who have no place in planned economy".

To the Plan were attached three charters, first for pea sants, second for workers and a third for women enumerating and guaranteeing their respective economic, political, legal cultural and social rights.

This, in brief, is the "New Kashmir" Manifesto of the Nationalists which they submitted to the Maharaja some time after they decided to boycott the Royal Commission and with draw their nominees from it. It was an interesting though thoughtlessly drafted document, envisaging the establishment of a communist State yet, opportunistically enough, it guaranteed the perpetuation of the alien Dogra rule in Kashmir and gave the Maharaja a solemn assurance that he would continue to exercise

the right of general control over the administration of the State. While publishing the Manifesto for the information of the people Abdullah in a foreword expressed the hope that "in our New Kashmir we shall build again the men and women of our State who have been dwarfed for centuries of servitude, and create a people worthy of our glorious motherland".

Sir Ganga Nath, President of the Royal Commission, sub mitted his own report to the Maharaja by the end of October because all other members without exception, refused to sign it when he asked them to do so on the 27th October as he would not allow them to discuss it before affixing their signatures. The report was quietly shelved and never saw the light of the day. Probably that was the only wise thing to do. The find ings and the recommendations which became known to some of the ever watchful news ferrets, were such as could never have satisfied even the most moderate sections of Kashmiris.

The meteoric rise of Jinnah and the growing popularity among the Muslims of his two-nation theory as well as of the demand for partition of the subcontinent made Hindu politi cians in British India worried over the future of Kashmir. Among them was Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru on whom Maharaja Hari Singh relied most for advice in constitutional and political matters. Even that liberal no-party politician thought that it would be dangerous to lose more time beating about the bush and that the National Conference and the Dogra Government must come closer and become friends to defend the country against the on-rushing tide of Muslim communalism on the one hand and the democratic forces on the other. A plan of diarchy was therefore prepared and suddenly announced on 2nd October, 1944, according to which two of the posts of Ministers, one a Hindu and another a Muslim, were to be given to such persons who could command the confidence of the State Legislature. In that Legislature thirty-five out of seventy-five members were nomi nated by the Maharaja. Out of the forty elected members seven were chosen by *jagirdars*, landlords and Government pensioners and eleven were elected by Hindu and Sikh constituencies. There were only eight members of the National Conference, all Muslim.

The other Muslim members either belonged to the Muslim
ference Party or were independents. There was thus not a
of a chance for a candidate of either the National Confe
or the Muslim Conference to be chosen as a Minister unle
had the fullest backing of the Government. And after appo
ment what would be the role of the "popular" Minister ex
to give moral and constitutional support to the alien D
Government in all its acts of suppression, repression and opp
sion? The Dogra Raj in 1944 was in sore need of such a p
without which it was tottering.

From the beginning it was obvious whom the Maha
desired to take. The Nationalists could not conceal their ju
lation in anticipation of the election by the Assembly. Thou
the lure of office was difficult to resist, the leaders of the M
lim Conference after many days of "yes" and "no" finally dec
ed to boycott the elections. The political workers of progressi
outlook firmly advocated non-cooperation with the reforms fro
the very outset. *The Hamdard* wrote half a dozen editorial
exposing the conspiracy that lay hidden behind the move
dynamite the citadel of revolution in the State.

The Legislative Assembly elected a panel of six membe
who were recommended for the two posts of Ministers. It nee
mention that the leader of the National Conference Party
the Assembly from September, 1934, the very day of the birth
of the Legislature, was Mian Ahmed Yar. For reasons be
known to the Working Committee of the National Conferenc
not he but his deputy, Afzal Beg, was nominated as candidat
of the Nationalist Party for election. Mian Ahmed Yar, not un
naturally, felt disgraced but did not make any public complain
at the time and continued to lead the Party inside the Legislature
Out of the panel of six candidates Maharaja Hari Singh appoin
ted, on the 19th October, 1944, Afzal Beg, the nationalist
and Ganga Ram, an ultra-loyalist Dogra politician, as his Public
Works Minister and Home Minister respectively. The Nationa
lists were amply recompensed for their loyalty or perhaps it
would be more appropriate to say, for their treachery to the
Freedom Movement.

There were great rejoicings in the Nationalist circles on
appointment of Afzal Beg as a Minister to the Maharaja.
the public meeting which was held in Gol Bagh on the 19th
October Abdullah introduced not only Beg as the represen-
tative of the Freedom Movement but, oddly enough, also Ganga
Ram, who had till the very day consistently and vigorously
opposed all demands for liberalisation or democratisation of the
administration. For several days the Nationalist leaders went
about the Valley carrying Ganga Ram with them and telling
people that with the appointment of the two Ministers the revo-
lution for which they were strenuously labouring, had triumphed.

The acceptance of office by the Nationalists might have
satiated their hunger for power but it exposed all their claims
of progressivism. The New Kashmir Manifesto became a
mockery and a laughing-stock of the people. All the elements
which opposed the National Conference in the country parti-
cularly among the Muslims, began to become stronger and
stronger day by day. Boycott of the elections in the Legis-
lature to the two posts of the Ministers restored the Muslim
Conference to a popular position to a considerable extent.
Public memory is proverbially weak and the loyalist demonstra-
tions of the Muslim Conference leaders were more or less for-
gotten by the people.

In the beginning of 1945 the disaffection against the anti-
national and anti-democratic activities of the National Con-
ference became very widespread. People wanted to express
their resentment and demonstrate their anger. It so happened
that *Id Milad*, the birthday of Prophet Mohammed, fell in March.
It was decided that a procession be carried out through the
principle streets of Srinagar under the auspices of the Muslim
Conference on the 16th March to observe the festival. Every-
body, including the sponsors, expected it to be an ordinary
affair. But what a huge demonstration it proved to be! Never
before in the history of the city had people witnessed such a
long procession with such extraordinary enthusiasm in those
who participated and held banners and placards in their hands.
It took the procession three hours to pass a certain point.

The 16th March, 1945, is another important day in the a
nals of the Freedom Movement in the State. On this day the
volutionary masses rose spontaneously to hold the banner
freedom aloft in their hands after they had felt convin
that the Nationalists had betrayed them. It was compara
to the demonstration which the masses had held on the 2
September, 1931, of which mention has been made in an ear
chapter of this book. It is said that the demonstrators on
16th March were Muslim communalists imbued with religio
zeal. I do not agree. True, the sponsors of the proc
sion were the leaders of the Muslim Conference, but it
no doubt in the minds of those who saw it that the par
cipants were people owning all shades of opinion, thou
united like one man in their detestation of the atrocities
the Nationalists and the partisan spirit of the Maharaj
Government. The celebrations of the *Id Milad* served o
a cover. There were hundreds of placards bearing politi
slogans condemning high-handedness, corruption and treache
There were many flags of other colours along with thousan
of green banners. The slogans raised gave the whole sh
more of a political complexion than a religious one.

The leaders of the Kashmir Socialist Party toured t
Valley in the spring and established branches at Badgam, An
nag, Sopore, Kulgam, Shopian, Tral, Bandipur and other tow
The main task of this organisation still continued to be disse
nation of scientific knowledge on economic, political and so
problems confronting the State and the world at large. But sin
the party had a powerful weapon in the shape of the popu
The Daily Hamdard at their disposal, the ideology of socialis
and democracy was becoming known to literate classes in
nooks and corners of the Valley.

By the summer of 1945, it was clear that Sir B.N. R
had become misfit in the post of Head of the Administration
Kashmir. Despite his nobility of character and justice-lovi
nature, he had belied the expectation of the Maharaja and t
hopes of the State people. He had enjoyed his stay in Kashm
to the fullest and completely recouped his health. Whethe

he wanted to relinquish office or not, there was one ambitious man at the right hand of the Maharaja who had been scheming for many years to get the coveted job of the Prime Minister. Now he saw his chance to get in. With two "popular" Ministers in the State Council, it looked odd that the Prime Minister should be a non-State subject besides being entirely a creature of the ruler. So the Maharaja was persuaded to appoint Rai Bahadur Ram Chandra Kak, a Kashmir Pandit of the Valley, as his Prime Minister. Kak had started his life as a librarian of a local college and had by dint of hard work, intelligence and craftiness risen to the post of the Minister-in-Waiting of the Maharaja. He became the Head of the Administration in place of Sir B.N. Rao on 28th June 1945. The appointment was hailed by the Nationalist leaders in a rally of workers which was held in Mujahid Manzil on the 29th June. But knowing his antecedents, his views on politics and his hostility to the Freedom Movement, the Socialists maintained a critical attitude. The Muslim Conference held its 13th annual session in Poonch under the presidentship of Mir Waiz Usuf Shah on 1,2 and 3 July. The main theme of the speeches in the session was disapproval of the appointment of Kak as Prime Minister. He was dubbed as the "worst enemy of Muslims", "notorious administrator" and "unpopular figure". The session denounced diarchical system of Government, demanded establishment of a completely responsible ministry and assured non-Muslims of a fair and generous treatment at the hands of Muslims.

As was expected the aims and objects of the new Council of Ministers did not in any way differ from its predecessors. There was no change whatsoever in the policy of the Government excepting that the Maharaja with ample plausibility claimed that he had the support of the people in all that he or his Government did. Beg remained in the Government for one year and five months and during this whole period the unjust laws and regulations regarding *jagirdari*, landlordism, recruitment in Army, possession of fire arms, cow-slaughter, inheritance and others of similar iniquitous nature continued to be in force. Even the Government orders about medium of

instruction and its script stood uncancelled. Not only tha
laws to suppress people and burden them with more taxe
promulgated with the approval of the "popular" Ministers
in one thing Nationalist Beg was eminently successful. H
a large number of his relatives, friends and acquaint
appointed on high and low government jobs; he gave l
and lucrative contracts to those whom he liked. To this
Maharaja and his Government had no objection so long as
Nationalist Minister supported their policy on basic issues.

Afzal Beg is a resident of Anantnag. While he was in po
the local Co-operative Bank and the Co-operative Stores
to be in the grip of the Beg family. The distribution and
the necessities of life such as sugar, salt, kerosene oil, cloth,
were controlled and distributed among the people of the ta
through the agency of the Co-operative Stores. Not even a p
of the goods meant for the lakhs of peasants reached them. M
of the supplies, it was alleged, was sold in the black market
the Nationalist management of the Co-operative Stores. T
sent a wave of resentment in the peasantry.

In 1945 the whole country-side in the Valley was simmer
with discontent. The economic and social conditions of
tillers of the soil had always been pretty bad but the control
the necessities of life such as sugar, salt, cloth and kerosene
and the corrupt nature of those who were responsible for th
distribution made it worse. In the Anantnag tehsil, conditi
became simply intolerable. On 19th of July about a do
Kashmiris met in the Achhabal Garden with the purpose
discussing the situation and finding some ways and means
fight against the tyranny of those who were instrumental
making life unbearable for the peasants and other worki
classes living in the country-side. Among other things it w
decided in this meeting that an organisation be formed to defen
and safeguard the rights and interests of the peasants in th
State. Its name was to be the All Jammu and Kashmir Kisa
Conference. The meeting unanimously elected Abdus Sala
Yatu, a matriculate young peasant of village Khushipora, a
President. A written document recording the proceedings o

meeting with an oath to be true and loyal to the new
nization was drawn up and signed by all the members
ent.

The news of the meeting spread like wild fire first through
ng, Shahabad and Kuthar and then in hundreds of hamlets
Anantnag district. Within days Kisan committees began to
formed in big villages of the district. Before long these
mmittees were looked upon as rivals by the leaders of the
National Conference. No news about the formation of the
Kisan Conference or the village committees was published in
the Nationalist papers. Instructions were sent from Mujahid
Manzil, that the High Command utterly disliked the growth of
the peasant movement outside the precincts of the National
Conference. In order to warn the peasants against participa-
tion in the peasant rising without the approval of the High
Command, a batch of Nationalist leaders including Ghulam
Nabi and Hakim Mohammed Amin Qureshi, was despatched im-
mediately to the spot. It was 16 November, the day of *Id.*
There is a holy shrine at Kabamarg, a village seven miles to the
south of Anantnag. No less than twenty five thousand Muslims
had gathered here to offer prayers. Among the devotees this
year were the leaders of the Kisan movement besides the
Nationalist workers. When the prayers were over, Qureshi
ascended the dais to read *khutba*. Instead of delivering any
religious discourse he started to chide the Kisan leaders and
deride the peasant movement. Before he had uttered half a
dozen sentences, a few Kisan workers stood on their feet and
asked him to desist from casting aspersions on the popular
leaders of the working class. Qureshi ignored the warning of
the ill-clad, odd-looking, rebellious peasants and persisted in
abusing the new-rising leadership by calling them illiterate,
upstart and mean. This proved a signal which started a storm.
Qureshi was thrown down from the dais and was bruised.
The whole mass of people was now on their feet and a melee
ensued in which all the Nationalist workers were badly handled
along with many other innocent inhabitants of the Anantnag
town who happened to be in the gathering With great diffi-

culty and at the intercession of the Kisan leaders did the ers of the National Conference escape with their lives. day sixteen leaders of the Kisan Conference including A Salam Yatu, president, Habib Ullah, vice-president, Gh Ahmad Naz, general secretary, were implicated by the polic prosecutions were launched against them for taking part in a

The incident at Kabamarg made the Nationalist lea very apprehensive but it put more enthusiasm and vigour i Kisan workers. The Kisan movement began to extend from to day. Till November, that is when the movement was only months old, forty-five Kisan committees had sprung into life hundreds of workers were functioning actively like mission for a cause. The speeches of the Kisan leaders were regul reported in the few independent papers at Srinagar. T speeches made it increasingly clear that bitter experience in had made many Kisan leaders move away from narrow-min communalism and short-sighted nationalism. No doubt t were still vague about their objective. Most of them w attributing all the misfortunes of the peasantry to the ma nation and malice of city-dwellers but instinctively they put their finger not infrequently at the sore point. For th reasons the Socialists began to evince keen interest in movement and by the end of the year, *The Daily Hamd* vigorously espoused its cause.

The necessity for the formation of an alliance between peasant leadership and the Socialist Party, the two progressi and democratic forces in the Valley, was felt on either side. joint meeting of the top leaders of both parties was the fore arranged to exchange views on the objective of a democ tic revolution in the State and the problems facing the count The meeting was held in Srinagar on 24th March, 1946, a twenty-six leaders attended it. Prominent among those w took part in the deliberations were Abdus Salam Yatu, Hab Ullah Shah, Kanhaya Lal Kaul, Noor Mohammed, Prem Nat Bazaz, Mohammed Akram, Jagan Nath Sathu, Ghulam Ahma Naz, Azad Kamal, Prithvi Nath Butt, Asad Ullah Rishi, Ghula Mohammed Parey and Abdul Subhan.

The meeting lasted for more than eleven hours. Every problem was frankly thrashed out. The leaders decided to hold a congress of the working classes of Kashmir in Kaba- marg on 11, 12 and 13 May. No decisions were therefore adopted about the basic and the fundamental issues of the movement which were postponed to be decided by the congress itself. To make suitable preparations for the congress it was agreed that a convention of the prominent workers be held at Dyalgam on the 7th April.

The British Cabinet Mission which was exploring the possibilities of a solution of the Indian problem had declared that the future of Indian States was the concern of the rulers. The meeting took strong objection to this view and decided to submit a memorandum to the Mission demanding that while determining the future of the States, the opinion of the people living in the States and not the views of the rulers should be given weight. The Srinagar meeting brought the intellectuals and the working classes quite near each other by the clarifica- tion of ideas and ideologies. The two wings of the fighting forces were supplementary to each other and when they joined hands the combination thus formed became a complete whole. By this happy alliance the Freedom Movement received a fillip and when the convention met at Dyalgam, a village three miles distant from Anantnag it proved to be a tremendous success.

More than two hundred delegates from every part of Anantnag district and a few from other regions of the Valley came to participate in the discussions and deliberations of the political, economic and social problems of the State. Un- usual enthusiasm was in evidence in the small village of Dyalgam in which not only the adult male population took a proud part ; even women and children were seen giving a friendly ovation to the delegates as they streamed in on foot, in motor cars, on horseback or in tongas. The convention lasted for two days. Discussion started at noon and continued till midnight with a small break for dinner for half an hour. It was an amazing experience to find how the peasant workers intelligently com-

prehended the problems created by the rapidly changing th
The convention elected Abdus Salam Yatu as the preside
the first congress of the Kisan Conference which was to be
at Kabamarg. A sub-committee was formed in the conve
to draft a memorandum for submission to the Cabinet Mis
A telegram was sent to the Mission telling them that the
sants in Kashmir forming ninety per cent of the total popula
refused to be represented by any one other than the accredi
leaders of the Kisan Conference. This was considered ne
sary because the Nationalist leaders had been trying to secure
interview with the Cabinet Mission to represent the case of
State people according to their own ideology. A public me
ing was held in Dyalgam at the conclusion of the conventi
where about a dozen distinguished leaders spoke on the a
and ideals of the peasant movement. Nearly five thousa
people attended it.

The brilliant success that attended the convention gave
added impetus to the cause. The returning delegates took spa
of fire with them which had burnt in big flames at Dyalgam fo
two days and with this they lit the emotions of peasants wh
ever they went. How could the Nationalists remain unperturb
ed ? The High Command of the National Conference had reaso
to feel ruffled. The Muslim Conference was already a source
trouble for them. If the Kisan Conference was allowed to swel
it was bound to prove disastrous. Therefore Afzal Beg, wh
had by this time resigned from the Government but was roamin
about in India with Sheikh Abdullah in search of an interview
with the Cabinet Mission, returned in haste to his constituency
On hearing the sensational reports of the convention from his
colleagues, he impulsively decided to proceed to Dyalgam and
hold a public meeting there. This, he was sure, would break
the spell of the new movement. Peasants called Dyalgam their
stronghold, their citadel. If the fortress was bombarded, the
movement was bound to collapse But Afzal Beg was told that
no peasant in Dyalgam was prepared to hear him. That did
not deter the ex-Minister; he would carry a few hundred men
with himself from Anantnag.

The political adventure or as it might rightly be called an
med attack on the rising revolutionary movement of the
rking classes was launched on the 9th April in the morning.
here were nine lorries and twenty-two *tongas* in the force
rrying about four hundred men equipped with *lathis* and
ther weapons. Besides, a couple of hundred Nationalist volun-
eers went on foot towards Dyalgam. Afzal Beg did not lead
is armies; he remained behind and gave instructions that as soon
s the village was occupied and a public meeting arranged he
hould be informed.

Any one with a bit of sense could foretell that the Nationa-
lists were out to break peace and to shed blood. But the Kash-
mir Government took no notice and allowed the hooliganism to
take its own course. Peasants had received information of Beg's
evil intentions and sinister move in advance. Their leaders had
instructed them to maintain calm and let the Nationalists hold
their meeting peacefully. But when the Nationalist workers
and volunteers reached Dyalgam they raised filthy slogans abus-
ing the peasant movement and its leaders. There was a big
clash the exaggerated reports about which spread all around.
Within the twinkling of an eye, more than ten thousand pea-
sants with their anger roused to highest pitch, were seen noisily
marching about in the village. The clashes that followed brought
the Nationalists to their senses. Many among them were bea-
ten ; parts of a few *tongas* and lorries were damaged. Some
peasants also sustained injuries in the scuffle. But the influx of
peasants went on unabated and therefore the Nationalists
saw safety in running back to Anantnag. Hearing about the
fierce opposition of the peasants Afzal Beg rushed to Dyal-
gam in a car but not before a posse of policemen had left for the
disturbed place. Barely had he reached the village and left
the protection of his car, a peasant woman put her own *qasaba*
(head gear) on Beg's head which signified, according to Kashmir
tradition, the greatest disgrace that could be done to a male.
The peasants attacked his car and broke some of its glass screens.
To his fright Beg found that he had been deserted by his follow-
ers and was surrounded on all sides by the hostile and infuriated

men and women of the surrounding villages. Meanwhile peasant leaders, Habib Shah and Azad Kamal, had arrive the scene. The former summoned all the peasants and b to deliver an oration, the latter came to the rescue of Beg was carried away with the assistance of the magistrate and posse of police on duty, put in his car and pushed dow Anantnag.

To keep his face and prestige before his admirers addressed a public meeting on the outskirts of Anantnag in evening where, oddly enough, he attacked local Hindus abused them for supporting the peasant movement.

In conceiving this ill-fated political adventure Afzal had made a fatal miscalculation on the basis of a similar torious, though ignominious, experience which he has had seve years ago. In 1936 there was a quarrel between the Musl and Pandits of Mattan, another village five miles to the no of Anantnag. A patch of land was under dispute. As an ad cate of the Muslim cause Afzal Beg had tried to brow-beat lo Pandit leaders. To his discomfiture they had responded equa harshly. Not to be outdone Beg went to Anantnag and retur ed in the afternoon with about five thousand Muslims equipp with *lathis*. The Hindus being only a few hundred in number, w mortally afraid when they saw the big army approaching und the command of Afzal Beg. They shut themselves up in the houses and let the Muslims do what they liked. Happily n thing untoward occurred but the commander was satisfied wi the results. The helpless minority of the Pandits had bee humbled. Beg had mistaken peasants for Pandits in Dyalgam That was his miscalculation and the cause of his defeat.

The Dyalgam incident made the Nationalists more furious To tackle the rising peasant movement became a question o life and death for them. They must either crush the move ment or get crushed themselves in grappling with it. They saw that it was impossible to capture Dyalgam but there were other important towns in the district which should not be allowed to copy Dyalgam and become supporters of the movement. Afzal Beg turned his attention towards them. But

ever he went he had to face hostility and opposition. He an to intimidate the leaders of the Kisan movement. Here is excerpt from the letter of resignation of Pandit Prithvi Nath at, B.A. LL.B., vice-president of the Kisan Conference and a mber of the Anantnag Bar, which he sent to the President of an Conference on 11th April. It speaks for itself:

"In the interests of life and property of my relatives and myself I wish to retire from politics. The incident in Dyalgam on 7th April, 1946, which ended in a clash between the adherents of the National Conference and the supporters of the Kisan Conference has made my bare existence impossible in Anantnag where our political opponents threaten to kill me. Mirza Mohammed Afzal Beg's repeated venomous utterances against me have struck terror in the hearts of my kith and kin and I do not want to be the cause of their destruction.

"It is really a misfortune to be born in Kashmir and more so as a Hindu. The National Conferencites who are quite adept in the art of inciting people to violence in the name of religion can conveniently destroy me. I shall continue to serve the Kisan Conference, which is dearest to me, in other ways".

Undaunted by the hostility and the shameful tactics of the Nationalists the peasant leaders in the meantime made earnest preparations for the holding of the congress at Kabamarg. It was evident that the Nationalists would leave no stone unturned to see that no peasant congress was held at all. The Nationalists had worked themselves mentally to such a pitch where it became impossible for them to imagine that any political organisation other than the National Conference with pretensions to revolutionary ideology could exist in the State or at any rate inside the Valley. Afzal Beg considered the birth of the Kisan Conference as a challenge to him personally because the party was born in his constituency which not only he but all his colleagues took for granted as the stronghold of nationalism where not a dog could bark or a cock could crow without the permission of the Nationalist leaders. In the beginning the Nationalists had simply ignored the rise of the peasants. After some time they attempted to kill the movement by treating it beneath contempt. They also used the weapons of bribery to corrupt the poor peasant workers, and of appeal to the religious sentiments of the Muslim peasants but nothing availed.

When these tactics failed they resorted to open violent methods in which Afzal Beg and his prominent lieutenants participated in person. When the brave peasant leaders successfully resisted this suppression and violence it became the most serious problem for the Nationalists to tackle. Beg's unsuccessful adventure doubly harmed them. It had ended in dismal failure and also brought disgrace and discredit on the head of the organisation. This made Beg quite desperate. Whether after taking advice with his colleagues of the High Command or without their consultation he decided to prepare for the last ditch battle with his redoubtable opponents. By the end of April he held a meeting of his best and trusted well-wishers in the district and prepared a plan first to persuade peasantry not to attend the Kabamarg Congress and next if it was held to attack the *pandal* and make it physically difficult to hold any session. A group of about one hundred picked, daring Nationalist volunteers was organised for the second purpose in view.

Reports of the Nationalist designs reached the headquarters of the Kisan Conference. To meet the emergency if the nefarious plan was actually put into operation, the Kisan leaders decided to form a volunteer corps of their own. Within a couple of days no less than five hundred illiterate but well-built peasants left the fields where they were preparing the soil to sow paddy and joined the corps to defend the peasant movement against the fiercest onslaught of the Nationalists. On 23rd of April a public meeting was held at village Vanihama where the volunteer corps was inaugurated. It was a sight worth seeing. *Khaki* uniforms on their bodies, varnished *dandas* in their hands and marching in rows with their feet in tune one could hardly believe that these men had been working in fields only a few days before. Peasants—men, women and children—from the country-side had collected to witness the inauguration ceremony. What joy it gave them to see this revolution taking place under their own eyes. They could not believe what they saw. Women vied with men in raising full-throated slogans admiring the volunteer corps, the Kisan leaders and the revolutionary movement.

Kabamarg is a tiny village seven miles distant to the south of Anantnag. It is half a mile away on the right side from the Anantnag–Verinag Road. When one leaves this road at Larikpura one has to descend about four hundred yards and then ascend again the same distance. Having reached the top of the mound, one abruptly finds a lovely green pasture land stretching before one on which stand some stately *chinars* and other green trees. The few mud huts forming the village together with the holy *ziarat* of the Muslim Durgah is on the opposite end of the land. The place is fully exposed to the sun but being on some more height than the surrounding areas the fresh and fragrant wind constantly blows throughout night and day making it extremely pleasant to camp here. This spot was destined to become the venue of the historic congress of the Kashmir Kisan Conference where the teeming and toiling people of the State adopted decisions of far-reaching consequences for the first time in the annals of the land.

On 11th May this beautiful pasture land set in enchanting surroundings where hardly a few cowherds used to be seen grazing their cattle, became a city of tents and *shamianas.* Some of the leaders and workers had arrived a couple of days earlier and seen to it that everything was arranged properly and completely. The Congress was to begin its first session in the afternoon, on the 11th May. Early in the morning batches of peasant students went in small processions to the nearby villages to collect funds and address the local people on the aims and objects of the movement. One such procession was accompanied by the peasant band and buglers. They were ambushed by the Nationalist volunteers and beaten; some musical instruments were snatched from them. This was a warning to the peasant leaders which they could not ignore. Further enquiries revealed that a big gang of the Nationalists equipped with diverse weapons had collected at the village Nasu at a distance of half a mile making preparations to attack. The Police was present but took no notice of the Nationalist hooliganism.

Two opinions prevailed at Kabamarg as to how the Nationalist attack was to be faced. The extremists were of

the strong view that the peasant volunteer corps should go ahead and disperse the Nationalists, if need be, by force. But moderate leaders were of the view that such a step would result in bloodshed and prove detrimental to the growth of the movement. By doing so peasants shall be playing in the hands of the Nationalists inasmuch as the congress might end in a scuffle without achieving its purpose. The moderates advised that the congress should go on with its work and the volunteer corps should defend the *pandal* on all sides. The latter view won the majority. Abdul Gani Magray, chief of the Kisan Volunteer Corps, was instructed to place his 500 uniformed men round the entire camp and defend it at all costs.

Perhaps the deployment of this volunteer force might not have deterred the Nationalist hooligans from implementing their evil designs. But when in the afternoon thousands upon thousands of peasants with tiny and big red flags in their hands streamed into the *pandal* which had been tastefully decorated with flowers, green leaves, arches, festoons and buntings, the courage of the Nationalists forsook them. They dared not come near the camp. They did not however disperse either. When the congress began its open session in the evening amidst the singing of peasant songs, sounding of bugles and firing of crackers, the Nationalists came nearer the camp and raised filthy slogans abusing the peasant movement and its leaders. A rumour went round that the attack was imminent. The situation became very tense. At this stage to the horror of the peasant leaders it was revealed that a strong posse of workers, espousing extremist views and equipped with sharp spears and knives, were mixed with the big audience and were ready to measure swords with the Nationalist opponents. What the result would be if the clash actually came about it was not difficult to imagine. Very dexterously and calmly the peasant leaders persuaded the extremists to disarm and desist from taking the dangerous step. When I had a look at the collection of the weapons kept under the dais I was terrified. It was remarkable how the armed peasants behaved in a disciplined manner and implicitly obeyed their leaders. The composure of

the congregation of twenty thousand people was also unequalled in the history of political agitation in Kashmir. Happily soon it came to be known that the Nationalists had abandoned the idea of an attack and were content with raising slogans; that facilitated the task of restoring complete order in the camp.

This eruption in the Valley, this elemental movement of the peasant masses, was not new. Kashmir had seen such an upsurge before in 1931. But there was a big difference between what had happened then and what was happening now. No doubt the basic causes were the same in both cases. But while in 1931 religion had played no small part in rousing the passions and emotions of Kashmir Muslims, in 1946 the peasants were moved to action by the awareness of the causes of exploitation, persecution and tyranny. In 1931 the Hindu Raj was the enemy which was to be overthrown. Today the revolt was against the Nationalist renegades no less than the alien Dogra Rule. Fifteen years ago the Freedom Movement was run on religious lines and was deeply communal. In 1946 religion was being consciously divorced from politics; the Freedom Movement was secularised at any rate so far as the Kisan Congress was concerned.

The three day session of the Kabamarg Congress was a new refreshing experience in Kashmir politics. More than a hundred delegates had come from all parts of the Valley to participate in the deliberations. Barring a few educated ones all of them had never known what a political congress looked like. Yet whether it was in committee rooms or in the open session they behaved and spoke with such decorum and constitutional propriety that no observer could have believed that all of them were taking part in such discussions for the first time, There was enthusiasm, serenity, responsibility and tolerance. Every one tried to understand others point of view. Even the most illiterate was making efforts to comprehend the intricate problems that faced the country and the toiling masses. It looked like the real parliament of the peasants and workers who were guided by the sympathetic and patriotic intellectuals. Except for a diversion when the peasant poets and lyricists held

a symposium the congress functioned in a business-like fashion.

Welcoming the delegates to the congress, Ahad Ullah Mir, President of the Reception Committee, observed:

"Only a toiler can feel and understand the agony of a fellow toiler, No one else can do so. The upper classes are only misleading us by their alluring slogans and schemes. They, in no way, want our freedom".

Narrating the bitter experiences of the toiling masses he stated:

"The Freedom Movement in our country is now fifteen years old. It has been dinned into our ears since long that the movement aims at complete emancipation of the toiling masses. But the freedom is yet to come and meanwhile during past six years of global war the upper classes, in no uncertain terms, laid before us their interpretation of freedom. During this period commodities essential for the life of the people became scarce in villages, not for all but only for the masses. The upper classes got these commodities in abundance in our name but totally deprived us of the same. Miserable as we began to feel we, however, became conscious of the fact that the upper classes and the toiling masses were two distinct forces. It is wise to believe that the toiling masses can never achieve freedom so long as they do not have their own organisation free from the influence of the upper classes. An awakening has been noticeable among the masses during past nine months and naturally the upper classes feel ill at ease. They have, however, begun to realise that we are undoubtedly tyrannised and oppressed".

Regarding the future of the peasant movement, Ahad Ullah declared:

"As a matter of fact the upper classes are worried about their personal interests. They believe that if the toiling masses carried on their organisational activities unchecked and unhampered their vested interests will come to an end. It is why they seek a compromise with us so that they could obstruct our march. But we have met here in a conference to warn them that our movement will live till the toiling masses of the State achieve complete freedom".

In his brief presidential address Abdus Salam Yatu succinctly stated the aims of the Kisan movement and the problems facing the country and the community. Describing the causes of the birth of the working class movement in the State, Abdus Salam said:

"The movement of the toiling masses in the world has awakened us also. We have begun to look at the freedom struggle of our country from a different angle. Now political freedom alone is not our cherished goal.

We demand and crave for social, economic and spiritual emancipation as well. The toiling masses of the subcontinent of India not only want to throw away the yoke of foreign imperialism but are also keen to free themselves from the bondage of indigenous feudalism and capitalism. The day of deliverance from alien rule is not far off. Events bear testimony to the fact that the British cannot stay long in India. There is an awakening in the country and the British cannot hold it in subjugation. But let me pose a question. Who will replace the British authority in India? Will there be a government of the upper classes or one representing the toiling masses? This is the main and the biggest problem facing the country at present".

Regarding the partition of India he observed:

"The upper class Hindus, having thrown into background the question relating to the future Government of India, are engaged in the dispute over *Akhand* Hindustan with a view to preserve their vested interests. Their counterpart among Muslims demand the establishment of Pakistan for identical reasons. But we stand neither for the one nor for the other. We believe that so long as it is not decided who the future rulers are to be we can neither support *Akhand* Hindustan nor side with the demand for Pakistan. Our first task is to do away with the prevailing social and economic inequality and injustice and lay the foundations of a new and just order of society. It is only when this objective is achieved that the people of India can themselves decide whether they want to preserve the unity of the country or divide it. At the present moment the basic problem referred to above does not receive necessary attention. The supporters of *Akhand* Hindustan and Pakistan want to preserve the present social order which is dominated by capitalists and feudalists. That being so the toiling masses can have least interest in this scramble for power".

Speaking about the aims of the movement Yatu stated:

"Following in the footprints of the workers of Europe we have to put an end to the capitalistic and feudalistic social order so that a new society based on social justice and equality is brought into being. We want an end of all kind of exploitation so that the peasants are not tyrannised and the mill-owners get no opportunity to rob the workers of the fruits of their labour. All laws aimed at sucking the blood of the toiling masses need to be repealed and abolished. We want establishment of a society which will guarantee to the workers fullest opportunity for progress".

Enumerating the bitter experiences of the working classes of the State which they had gained during the course of the Freedom Movement Abdus Salam said:

"The Freedom Movement in our State is now fifteen years old. The toiling masses have nourished it by undergoing supreme financial and